

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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Price 6 Cents

83 DEGREES NORTH LATITUDE; OR, THE HANDWRITING IN THE ICEBERG.

By HOWARD AUSTIN.

AND OTHER STORIES.



Jack clubbed his weapon and struck madly at the giant. The next moment the hand of the latter clutched his throat. Just then Captain Franklin reached the mutineer. But he came too late.

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THE HANDWRITING IN THE ICEBERG

By HOWARD AUSTIN

CHAPTER I.

ICE-BOUND IN THE ARCTIC SEA

On the 18th day of May in the year 18—, according to the log of the *Nancy White*, a whaler from New Bedford, she picked up a drifting boat off Cape Farewell in the Arctic sea.

In the bottom of the boat was found one man clad in the heavy bearskin garments of an Esquimau.

At first it was believed the man was dead, and that he was a native of the frozen north land. He showed no sign of life.

But the boat was recognized, for it bore the name of a whaler which was supposed to have been lost in the far Arctic seas with all on board.

The unfortunate vessel was the *Forward of Boston*, and one of the stanchest crafts of its kind afloat.

Despite the fact that the man in the drifting boat showed no sign of vitality, diligent, intelligently directed efforts were made to kindle anew the fire of life within him.

And success finally rewarded the humane efforts of the crew of the *Nancy White*. The human drift of the Polar Sea revived—slowly returned to life like one from a long, long voyage into the unknown.

"He lives! He lives!" was the shout from the sailors grouped around the rescued man when the first sign of returning vitality was discovered in him.

All had seen before that when his bearskin garments were removed, that he was a white man, not an Esquimau, and evidently one of the crew of the lost whaler, for the name of that vessel, which, as stated, appeared on the drifting boat, was accepted as evidence.

"Now we shall soon learn something from this man regarding the fate of the lost vessel to which he belonged," said the captain of the *Nancy White*.

All hands were of the same opinion.

But when the rescued man was fully restored, the fact was immediately shown by his words and manner that his mind was a wreck.

Yes, the terrible hardships and perils which he had endured in the frozen zone had unsettled his reason. In short, he was insane.

However, he gave the name of Martin Bradway, boatswain, and in a wild and disconnected way, told a strange story of mutiny and shipwreck. Of ice-bound prison seas, of awful suffering, including a journey of over hundreds of miles over a sea of ice.

The poor fellow was questioned closely; every effort was made to elicit an accurate account of the loss of the *Forward*.

In time, by putting the facts which Bradway stated in his incoherent way together, it seemed pretty well established that the crew of the *Forward* had been compelled to desert their vessel, which had been caught in the ice after a fearful mutiny had taken place.

But the one point to which Bradway adhered throughout all his ravings was that some of the crew of the *Forward* still survived.

And he constantly repeated when asked to state the location of the place where he had left the survivors:

"Eighty-three degrees, north latitude!"

But that was all. He repeated the words like one who had learned a lesson.

The *Nancy White* was homeward bound, laden with a full cargo of whale oil, for she had made a wonderful "catch" in Baffin's Bay, where she fell in with a complete school of whales.

The whaler captain did not attempt to sail in search of the lost Arctic sailors. The owners' orders were imperative. He was to make the homeward voyage as soon as he had secured a cargo of oil.

Then, too, he had only the testimony of an Arctic-made madman to rely upon.

If the latter had left some of his comrades alive in the far frozen latitude toward the Pole they might all have perished later.

On the homeward voyage Martin Bradway grew to be well and strong physically.

But his intellect did not recuperate. His mania continued. For hours he would stand upon the deck near the stern and gaze fixedly at the north, where, amid snow and ice, he claimed to have left his comrades.

And in a voice full of hopeless and monotonous intonations he would mutter ever and anon:

"Eighty-three degrees, north latitude—eighty-three degrees, north latitude!"

The *Nancy White* made a safe voyage to the home port and Martin Bradway was sent to Boston, where he presented himself at the office of the Arctic Ship Company, the owners of the lost whaler. The captain of the vessel which had picked him up in Arctic seas accompanied Bradway.

The former told the story.

And the rescued man gave his account of what had happened to the *Forward* in the same incoherent way as before.

He had been immediately recognized at the office of the owners of the *Forward*, and his name appeared on the list of the crew of the lost vessel, there preserved, as the boatswain.

Bradway had sailed on vessels belonging to the Arctic Ship Company for years. He was known to be an honest and reliable seaman, familiar with navigation in the polar seas.

His incoherent story was joyfully accepted, for it gave reason for hope where there had been despair.

The only son of the senior member of the great firm of whaling ship owners, a lad of eighteen, was present in the office when Bradway's story was told, and so was the only son of the captain of the lost vessel.

The former was named Jack Deering. The latter was called Tom Barton.

The lads were about the same age, and devoted friends and comrades. Each had made a single voyage to the Arctic seas.

Tom Barton fairly shed tears of joy when he learned that some of the crew of his father's vessel had been left alive by Bradway.

Eagerly he questioned the insane sailor, and finally he drew

from him the assurance that his father was one of the devoted little band who were imprisoned in the ice in the Arctic seas.

"They must be found! They must be saved! Oh, Mr. Deering!" cried Tom, excitedly, addressing the senior member of the firm; "you will send an expedition to rescue my father?"

"Certainly, my boy. We never desert our men, and the North Star, the splendid brig we had built last year, was constructed especially with a view to our using her as a patrol and rescue vessel to cruise the Arctic seas in search of any of our vessels which might be missing. The North Star shall receive sailing orders immediately," replied Mr. Deering, heartily.

"And with your consent I will sail on the vessel. I must take part in the search for the prisoners of the frozen sea. I must help find my father," said Tom, earnestly.

"You are a brave lad, and as you have no relative to consult in the matter, your father having left you in my care, I will consent. You shall be one of the crew of the North Star."

"Bravo!" cried Tom, delightedly.

And Jack Deering, approaching his father, said:

"Father, you agreed I should make another voyage this year if I liked, and I would like, above all things, to go with Tom on board the North Star."

"No, no. The North Star may cruise in unknown Northern seas and meet unheard-of perils. It will be no ordinary whaling cruise, such as I promised you," replied Mr. Deering.

"But, father——"

"Jack, it will be of no use whatever to argue the matter. You are my only son, and I will not expose you to the perils of a search which may cost the lives of every man engaged in it," said Mr. Deering, in a decisive manner, from which Jack knew there was no appeal.

The youth turned away, and his handsome and bold face became a perfect picture of disappointment. Jack was born with a love for adventure, and he was somewhat reckless. He was rather accustomed to have his own way, being the only son of the wealthy ship owner, and he did not like to give up the idea of being one of the crew of the North Star.

It was evident the rescuing brig was likely to make just the kind of an adventurous and thrilling voyage to the far North of which the youth had often dreamed.

Mr. Deering took up the list of the crew of the lost ship, the Forward, and he began reading the names aloud and questioning Bradway, trying thus to find out who the survivors were.

Presently he read the name "Nick Casquar."

The maniac from the Arctic wreck had been seated, but at the mention of that name he sprang to his feet.

His fists were clenched, his eyes blazed. There was an expression of rage and hate upon his usually placid countenance.

"Nick Casquar!" he cried. "Casquar the mutineer! The infernal rascal, who, with his confederates, robbed us of our last morsel of food and deserted us, who sought to kill all who stood by the captain to save the ship!"

The mad seaman brandished his arms wildly, and paced up and down as the mention of the name of Nick Casquar seemed to suddenly recall to his demented brain the recollection of a frightful drama of wrong and violence in the North Seas.

"Eighty-three degrees, north latitude! I swore to Captain Barton I'd never forget that, and I never shall! We will find them," added Bradway, more rationally than was usual with him.

The intense mental action occasioned by his rage at the memory of the evident treachery of Nick Casquar seemed to have quickened his intelligence and rendered his brain clearer.

Mr. Deering succeeded in drawing from him ultimately that, besides Tom's father, Captain Barton, he had left three of the crew alive with him, and that Nick Casquar and the mutineers had gone off by themselves.

The following day the North Star was provisioned to some extent, and two days later she was ready to sail.

She was a noble brig of one hundred and seventy tons, fitted up with a screw propeller and an engine of one hundred and twenty horse-power. She carried more top-sail masts than is usual. The stern made a straight line to the sea. She was sharp at the bows and sheathed with cast steel.

Throughout the rescue brig was characterized by the utmost solidity, and she was intended to resist enormous pres-

sure, for the frame was of teak-wood, remarkable for its extreme hardness.

There was a cannon of sixteen-pound calibre mounted on the forecastle on a pivot to allow of its being easily pointed in all directions.

The most careful attention was given to the stores, which consisted principally of salted and smoked meat, dried fish, biscuits, chests of tea and many sacks of coffee, also a large quantity of pemmican.

Anti-scorbutic preparations, such as lime juice and the like, were not omitted.

There was a supply of firearms.

And the powder magazine was full to overflowing.

Ice saws, hatchets and blasting cylinders, such as all Arctic explorers carry, were provided in abundance.

The crew consisted of eighteen men, not including Tom Barton and Martin Bradway. The mad Arctic sailor insisted upon accompanying the expedition. It was deemed advisable to take him.

Certainly he might, despite the unsettled state of his mind, be of assistance. He might recognize some landmarks in the Arctic lands which would render him invaluable as a guide.

On a bright, clear morning the North Star weighed anchor and put to sea, followed by the cheers and good wishes of an immense throng of people who had assembled at the dock to see her off.

But, much to the surprise of Tom Barton, he saw nothing of his boy comrade, Jack Deering. He would not have believed that Jack would let him depart upon his perilous mission to the frozen North without at least bidding him good-by.

Yet such seemed to be the fact.

Three days of fine weather followed the date of the sailing of the North Star. On the night of the third day Tom Barton, who occupied a forward cabin, was alarmed about midnight by a terrible cry for help.

The voice seemed to come from the hold.

And, leaping from his berth, thrilling with amazement, as he believed he recognized the voice of Jack Deering, Tom darted for the forward hatch.

One of the seamen of the watch was already descending, lantern in hand. Tom went down the stairs after him.

Immediately a thrilling scene was disclosed, and one as completely surprising as could well be.

Tom Barton saw Jack Deering struggling with a herculean man clad in rags and, possessed of a face that wore a positively ferocious expression.

Tattered as were the garments of the man, whom the lad knew at a glance was not a member of the crew, he could see they were the striped clothes of a convict.

Then an idea of the truth immediately dawned upon his mind.

He had read of the escape of a dangerous convict from the state's prison the day before the North Star left port.

A description of the man had been published. Tom knew at a second glance that the ferocious looking giant was the escaped convict, and that the fellow must have concealed himself on board before the brig sailed and become a stowaway.

Seeing Tom and his companion, the escaped convict released his hold upon Jack Deering.

And he stood at bay.

Jack Deering sprang to Tom's side, and the two lads grasped hands warmly as the former said:

"I was bound to go with you, so I became a stowaway. I was coming out of my hiding-place, when this fellow discovered me, and assaulted me, swearing he would kill me if I betrayed his presence on board.

Just then the first officer, Mr. Clelland by name, and several seamen descended the hatchway; the mate ordered the escaped convict to surrender. Seeing there was nothing else for it, he held up his hands.

But he said quietly:

"'Tain't no use to put me in irons. I don't mean no harm, an' I'm willin' to work my passage anywhere, away from where I escaped."

The captain was consulted, and it was his decision to let the convict make himself useful until they could land him at one of the Danish settlements on the coast of Greenland, there to be held until the return of the North Star.

The captain of the rescue vessel was Richard Franklin by name and he was as daring an Arctic navigator as one would readily find. He had long been in the service of Jack Deering's father, and, of course, he chided the boy severely for joining the expedition against the wishes of his father.

But it was too late to put back to port.

And the North Star pushed her way toward the north.

The escaped convict behaved so well and begged so hard not to be landed at one of the settlements on the coast of Greenland that he was allowed to continue on board the vessel.

Cape Farewell was passed at last, and, entering the sea north of the cape, the vessel made her way easily through the loose ice, but there was great danger from the icebergs which could be seen upon the horizon.

During the night the icemaster sounded the alarm, and all hands were called on deck.

Icebergs seemed to surge from all points of the surrounding sea, and the brig was soon wedged in among a field of moving ice which threatened to crush her at any moment.

CHAPTER II.

CAST AWAY ON A DRIFTING ICE CAKE.

The task of steering became exceedingly difficult. Two of the best hands were at the wheel constantly.

Ice mountains were reforming behind the ship, and there was no alternative but to bore a way forward through the floes.

Captain Franklin maintained his presence of mind, and so did all the crew, save Jeff, the darky cook, who had never sailed the Arctic seas before.

"Fo' heaven's sake! I'se never gwine to go to sea no moah, if dis coon once sets foot on de dry lan'. Oh, heaven save us!" cried Jeff, as he came out of the cook's galley.

Then he beat a hasty retreat to his quarters.

The captain quickly issued his orders.

The crew was divided into two companies, and ranged on the starboard and larboard, each man armed with a long pole pointed with iron, to push back the most threatening packs.

To add to the terror of the scene, the masses of drift ice, dashing and grinding against each other, caused a most ominous cracking and roaring sound.

Tom Barton and Jack Deering stood together, ice poles in hand, when a tremendous iceberg, a hundred feet high, suddenly changed its course and came crashing down through the floes, directly toward the brig.

The terrified crew threw down their ice poles and retreated to the stern.

"We are lost! Oh, father, your doom is certain now, if in the mercy of heaven you are yet alive!" cried Tom in despair.

Jack replied.

But his answer was lost in a tremendous noise, and a waterspout broke over the deck, while the brig heaved upward and made a frightful lurch.

Tom and Jack were swept away by the cold waves. Stunned, blinded and half drowned, they found themselves flung upon a great drifting ice cake.

As soon as the two lads somewhat recovered themselves, they saw the brig as it disappeared among lofty bergs in comparatively open water.

The whole mighty berg, which had so nearly destroyed the vessel, had completely disappeared as if by magic.

The phenomenon was startling—astounding.

But it was one which not infrequently occurs in the Arctic seas.

When floating icebergs become detached at the time of a thaw, they sail separately, and preserve their equilibrium, but, as they gradually drift southward, where the water is relatively warmer, they begin to melt and get undermined at the base, and the moment comes when their center of gravity is displaced and they go down. This had occurred just before the great berg reached the ship, causing the mighty upheaval of waters.

The berg had opened up a track behind her, through which the brig sped.

The snow had begun to fall, and it was evident the loss of the two boys was not immediately discovered by those on board the brig.

The situation of the two lads was desperate, indeed.

The great cake of ice drifted away, and it seemed they were doomed to perish at the very outset of the Arctic cruise.

The ice cake was about two acres in extent, and it abounded in hummocks, or ice hills, which shut out the view.

Their heavy Arctic clothing of woolen goods and furs had

protected the lads from the icy waters, and they began to look about for some place of shelter while they shouted wildly, without thinking the noise of the grinding ice would prevent their voices reaching their comrades.

It seemed the ice cake had entered a strong current, and it drifted rapidly for some time.

But finally it was arrested by a firm pack.

The snow fell less rapidly now, and, making their way over the ice, they began to hope the cake might be held where it was until the brig could return to rescue them.

"Captain Franklin will not desert us while there is the least chance to save us," said Tom, trying to appear hopeful.

"No, but the chances of his finding us are one in a hundred," replied Jack.

Just then a strange new sound came to the hearing of the two lads.

They paused and listened intently, while they gazed at each other with startled eyes.

"What was it? It sounded like a roar of some wild animal," cried Jack, presently.

Again the alarming sound was heard.

"It is the fierce growling of a bear," uttered Tom.

The sky had lightened with the cessation of the snow, and as if to confirm the words of the lad, at that moment two enormous polar bears appeared in sight.

A hummock of considerable size had concealed their approach, until they were very near the boy castaways.

But the great, shaggy monsters had scented the latter.

The polar bears, when maddened with famine, do not hesitate to attack man, as the records of all Arctic explorers prove.

And, as it might be taken for granted, the fierce animals which confronted the lads had probably been imprisoned on the drifting cake, where they could procure no food for a long time, they were undoubtedly maddened with hunger.

The eyes of the bears gleamed luridly.

And they showed their long fangs between their red jaws as they roared in unison, as they saw the two lads.

"What shall we do? They will attack us!" cried Jack.

"We can't retreat far. The pack which holds our cake is blocked back by firm obstructions at a distance, but there is no solid footing near the edge of our cake," replied Tom.

"Then we must fight them."

"Yes. Our revolvers are all right under our heavy jackets, I think. Perhaps we may frighten them off, but the polar bear is a hard animal to kill with a pistol bullet," replied Tom.

Both lads carried a brace of revolvers and a heavy sheath-knife in their belts under their outer garments.

The bears, after inspecting them for a moment, began to advance, growling more threateningly than ever.

The lads drew their revolvers, and they opened fire.

Crack! crack! crack! sounded the simultaneous reports of their weapons.

But the bullets reached no vital parts of the bears, and they came on. The wounds they received seemed to serve only to further madden them.

The boys sprang away.

And the bears pursued them. The speed the unwieldy animals attained seemed wonderful.

Dashing behind an ice hummock, Jack, who was in the lead, suddenly uttered a shout.

Bounding after his comrade, Tom cried:

"What is it, Jack?"

"Look—look!" shouted Jack, as Tom came up.

He pointed ahead.

Tom glanced eagerly in the direction indicated.

And he saw an oval hut evidently built of ice in the distance.

"An Esquimau hut! Quick, Jack! Let's seek to reach it. Perhaps we can hold it against the bears," cried Tom.

They bounded forward, and the bears continued in swift pursuit.

Reaching the hut, the lads found its low, narrow entrance partially blocked with a cake of ice.

But they displaced it and crept within.

All was darkness there. They crouched at the small opening, which was only large enough to allow one person to crawl in at a time.

The head of the foremost bear appeared at the opening in a moment. Tom took aim at one of the little glittering eyes of the Arctic monster and pressed the trigger.

His aim was true. The bullet crashed through the brain of the huge animal.

With a roar that seemed to shake the solitary Esquimau hut to its foundation, the bear fell back. The boys momentarily expected the second bear to attempt an entrance.

But after sniffing at the dead body of her companion, the other bear trotted off, much to the relief of the boys.

They had scarcely become convinced that the bear had really left them, when they were startled in a most surprising manner.

A strange, wailing cry reached them.

It emanated from within the hut. The tones were those of an infant. It must be there was a child in the hut.

Groping about, Tom came in contact with a great bundle of furs, and the wailing cries grew louder as he touched it.

Producing a water-proof match-safe, Jack struck a light, and then the lads unwrapped the bundle of furs and found an Esquimau baby.

"Wonder of wonders! It must be the ice on which this hut is built broke away from some point near the land during the absence from their dwelling of the parents of the little Esquimau," said Jack.

Match after match was lighted until a rude dish, filled with oil and provided with a wick, was found. The Esquimau lamp was lighted, and some dried fish and a mixture of oil and pounded roots were found.

Tom took the little Esquimau in his arms and fed it with some of the latter food, which it appeared to relish.

He was thus engaged when the entrance of the hut was abruptly darkened, and the succeeding moment an Esquimau crawled inside.

He was a powerful, squatty little man, clad in furs and armed with a spear.

Casting aside the weapon, he sprang forward, and, snatching the baby from the lad, hugged it, while a torrent of words spoken in the Esquimau tongue fell from his lips.

Then he turned to the surprised boys, and said in broken English:

"Me Joe, me come find baby!"

CHAPTER III.

THE HANDWRITING IN THE ICEBERG.

Astonished and rejoiced beyond the power of expression the boys listened.

And Tom hastened to explain how they had come there and asked Joe how he had reached the ice cake.

Nodding his head and blinking his little eyes to show he comprehended, the Esquimau stated in broken English that he was the owner of the hut and the baby, and that as the lads supposed, the cake had broken away from the mainland, where there was an Esquimau village, during the absence of himself and wife.

In an Esquimau skin-boat, or kayak, he had followed the cake, sometimes through the water and again over the solid ice, carrying the kayak on his shoulders.

He declared land was not far away, and proposed to take the boys to it, stating he could transport them, one at a time, through the floes in his kayak.

How gladly this proposition was accepted need scarcely be stated.

Joe explained, moreover, he had gained his knowledge of English from acting as a pilot and guide with an American exploring expedition.

He made good his proposal to save the lads. Some hours later, having made the transits through the floes in safety in the kayak, they reached the ice and snow-covered mainland, though they would scarcely have been sure they were not on a field of ice, but for the contrary assurance of Joe.

The friendly Esquimau gave the lads food, and with him they began the journey toward the Esquimau village whence Joe had come.

Eagerly they questioned him about the brig.

But he knew nothing about it, and the closest inspection they were able to make from the highest elevation failed to disclose any trace of it.

The lads also sought to learn if Joe had any knowledge of the lost whaler, the *Forward*, of which the *North Star* had come in search.

But Joe replied in the negative.

And the boys knew, of course, that eighty-three degrees, north latitude, was yet far away to the north.

After a long journey the Esquimau village was reached in safety.

It consisted of a score of ice huts, built on the shore of a bay.

The morning following the evening of their arrival at the Esquimau village the boys, who slept soundly because of great fatigue, were aroused by a great shouting in the village.

Springing up and hastening from the hut in which they had passed the night, what was their unbounded delight to see the *North Star* standing nobly into the bay.

An hour later the two lads, so miraculously preserved, were on board the brig.

Then negotiations were opened with Esquimau Joe, and he was finally engaged, with his sledge and a splendid dog team, to accompany the expedition.

When Joe had been taken on board, the brig resumed her course north.

How joyfully the boys were welcomed by their comrades can be imagined, and the lads had to repeat the story of their adventures again and again.

The voyage was continued with varying fortunes. The cold became more and more intense.

On the 31st of August the brig reached Belcher Channel. There was scarcely an inch of water under her keel then, and as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing to be seen but ice fields.

For some time there had been loud mutterings of discontent among the crew. About half the men did not hesitate to urge the captain to turn southward.

But he stoutly refused, and Tom entreated the discontented men to persevere in the search for his father.

The escaped convict, who answered to the name of Brand, was often seen in whispered consultation with the disaffected members of the crew.

The captain greatly feared a mutiny.

On the day when the brig reached Belcher Channel the outbreak came. The captain, Tom Barton and Jack Deering were standing near the forward hatchway when eight seamen, headed by the escaped convict, approached.

"We have got something to say to you, an' you best listen," said the ex-convict, insolently.

"Well, what is it?" asked the captain, coolly, making an effort to restrain his rising anger.

"There's nothing but death and disaster awaitin' us if we go on. We don't mean to do it, and that's flat! The rest of the crew are locked in the fo'castle and you want to work the ship about, an' give us your word you'll navigate south, or we propose to set you and the boys, who are hounding you on, adrift in a whaleboat and work the brig south without you."

"What! would you maroon us in this sea of ice, you inhuman wretch?" cried the captain.

And his hand traveled to his pistol.

"At him, men!" cried the escaped convict, and he was about to lead the charge.

But at that thrilling moment up through the hatchway leaped Martin Bradway, the mad seaman from the lost ship *Forward*.

In his hands he clutched a marlin spike. His eyes seemed to flash fire. With a mad yell, he sprang at the ex-convict and felled him senseless to the deck, with one blow of his weapon.

"Back, ye cowards! Back, I say! Ye shall go on! Eighty-three degrees north latitude shall be reached, I swear it!" the Arctic maniac fairly shrieked.

The captain and the two boys had whipped out their pistols, and they now covered the mutineers, who had produced weapons which they had concealed under their garments.

It looked as if a desperate fight was about to begin on the deck of the rescue ship among men who should have stood together devotedly in that region of peril.

But at that critical juncture a tremendous crash was heard.

The door of the fore-castle was burst open and out rushed the men who remained loyal to the captain.

Seeing them, the mutineers sullenly complied with the stern command of the captain to throw down their weapons. The escaped convict and one other man, who acted as a lieutenant to the leader of the mutineers, were placed in irons and imprisoned in the hold. Order was restored.

An effort was made to force the brig onward, and the engines were taxed to the utmost, but in vain. The brig was wedged fast, for the time at least.

The next day, as there seemed nothing else to do, Captain Franklin and the two boys and three sailors, with Esquimau

Joe, left the brig. The sledge and dog team was employed to transport the party, who intended to make an exploring tour over the ice to ascertain if there was any open channel in the vicinity.

Mr. Clelland, the first mate, was left in command of the brig.

Taking the mate aside just before he left the brig, the captain gave him some secret orders.

The sledging party had proceeded for some distance over solid ice, and the brig had been left out of sight for a considerable time when they came in sight of a lofty iceberg frozen in the floes. The sun glinted from the surface, making it a thing of dazzling splendor. Like some mighty golden obelisk, it appeared at a distance.

A nearer approach showed the ice pyramid was, in places, quite transparent.

The sledge was halted to rest the dog team, and the two boys wandered along the side of the remarkable iceberg.

Suddenly a thrilling exclamation pealed from the lips of Tom Barton, who was at a short distance from his boy comrade.

Jack ran forward, and he saw Tom pointing up at a certain point where the ice of the berg was as clear and transparent as crystal.

The boy's eyes were dilated with wonder, and he exclaimed, as Jack came up:

"See—see! There is a human form—a man—frozen in the iceberg!"

It was, indeed, as Tom said. The man in the iceberg was in a sitting attitude, and the strangeness of his attire struck the lads at once. He wore a great yellow hat, with plumes in it. From his shoulders hung a rich mantle of fur, and his legs, to above the knees, were encased in large boots. He had long, black hair, and wore a pointed beard and a fierce mustache.

The boys shouted, and their companions soon came up. Then ice axes were brought from the sledge, and, at the cost of some labor, the frozen man was cut out of the berg.

His garments were declared by Captain Franklin to be of a style in vogue in Spain a hundred years ago. A search of his pockets revealed only some Spanish coin, a dagger and a package done up in a species of oil-silk. This was opened and a strange manuscript, traced on a kind of thin parchment which was perfectly preserved, was brought to light.

But the handwriting found in the iceberg was in Spanish. No one but Captain Franklin, who had spent his earlier seafaring years in the Spanish trade, could decipher it.

He had begun to read the manuscript, when suddenly the report of a cannon was heard from the direction of the brig.

"Heavens!" cried the captain. "That means danger for our vessel! for I instructed Mr. Clelland to fire the cannon as a signal if there was any further trouble with the mutineers."

Then he ordered an immediate return. The dead man was hastily buried in the ice, and the party set out for the brig. The reading of the strangely found manuscript was postponed, but the captain said:

"From what little of the manuscript I have read it is evident to me it contains some startling revelations."

The trailing party followed the trail of the dog sledge back to the place where they had left the vessel.

But as they approached the locality they saw the whole aspect of the scene had changed during their absence.

And the North Star had disappeared.

Where she had been wedged in the ice there was now an open sea.

"Ha! the eruption of a submarine volcano, such as abound in the Arctic seas, must have done this; and the brig has either been destroyed or the mutineers have captured her and sailed away," said the captain.

"Abandoned—abandoned in the frozen sea! Oh, what an awful fate!" he added, bitterly.

CHAPTER IV.

THE READING OF THE MANUSCRIPT—THE ARCTIC SAVAGES.

It was an awful moment for the little band left to perish without resources in the very heart of the Polar regions.

The highest order of courage was required to face these terrible calamities.

But Captain Franklin possessed that qualification despite his momentary yielding to despair.

"Fortune favors the brave!" he suddenly exclaimed with

an effort," as he noted that his previous hopeless words had impressed his followers as the knell of their doom.

"But we have no fuel," said Tom Barton.

"And only provisions enough in the sledge to last us a single day," added Jack Deering.

The boys looked into each other's faces as they spoke, and each read in the expression of the other the most utter hopelessness.

Esquimau Joe, the dog driver, sat on his sledge, silently staring out upon the pale green waters of the open channel.

The three sailors were gathered about him.

"Joe!" cried Captain Franklin, as his glance fell upon the sturdy little Esquimau, "do you think it is possible for us to reach any Esquimau settlement?"

"No. Joe say many days south to first Esquimau hut. All die—dogs die on the way with no eat," was the disheartening reply.

"Well, at all events, the first thing is to make a hut, for we can't stay long exposed to this temperature," said the captain.

"Yes, with the temperature 32 degrees below zero we shall freeze without shelter," replied Tom.

"To work! While there's life there's hope, and I for one don't mean to say die yet!" shouted Jack Deering.

His buoyant spirits infected the others. Nothing could ever long depress Jack. He possessed the happiest disposition in the world.

All hands set to work, and soon a hut of ice blocks was built, large enough to shelter the entire party.

Huddled in the shelter, the castaway partook of food from the scanty supplies with which they had laden the sledge when they set out on the exploring expedition from the brig.

Then Captain Franklin bethought himself again of the strange manuscript found upon the dead man frozen in the iceberg.

"Now I will finish reading the handwriting of the ice-immured seaman," he said.

He advanced to the entrance of the ice hut, where there was the best light, and drawing the parchment on which the writing was inscribed from his pocket, he read it to himself.

As stated, the singular document was written in Spanish.

As he read, of course, the captain translated it, and when he had mastered it he uttered a shout.

"What is it?"

"Read it aloud!"

Slowly the captain read the manuscript aloud in English. It ran as follows:

"In the year A. D., 1780, on the 18th day of the month of February, I, Pascal Cordova, captain of the good ship Marquetta—a free-rover of the Spanish main—writes this statement in duplicate, and shall carry one copy on my person, while my first officer will bear with him the other.

"Being sorely pressed and harassed for many days on the high seas by the pursuit of the cruisers of the British, we were driven into northern waters until we penetrated where man never went before.

"In a terrible storm we were driven on a strange coast in a most remarkable manner. An upheaval of the sea cast our vessel upon an icebound shore, but she did not go to pieces. The location from my own calculation is Longitude 100 degrees 15 minutes, Latitude, 80 degrees 34 minutes.

"The vessel is laden with much provisions of all kinds, fuel, and arms and ammunition. Also the treasure of many rich prizes taken at sea. For nine months we have been imprisoned here, and found it impossible to get the vessel afloat. The terrible disease of scurvy, with the cold, has caused the death of all but eight of the ship's company.

"We, the survivors, shall leave the vessel on the morrow. Commending our souls to the Blessed Virgin, we shall take the long boat with us on a sledge, and hope to get to Smith's Sound and reach some whaling vessel that will rescue us.

"Should we perish on the way we hope this MSS. will be found by someone who will forward it to Spain.

"Signed,

"Pascal Cordova, Captain,

"Miguel Demassa, First Mate."

For a moment after Captain Franklin completed the reading of the strange manuscript there ensued dead silence.

Then as one man the castaways burst into a cheer.

They knew that the last observation taken by the captain, when the North Star was hemmed in by the ice, located the vessel at no great distance, relatively speaking, from posi-

tion given in latitude and longitude in the strange manuscript.

"We must find the Spanish privateer!" said the captain.

"It is our only hope," replied Tom Barton.

"I think we are about three days' sledge journey from the location of it, as given in the manuscript," continued the captain, after consulting a pocket-book in which he kept the records of his observations as a navigator.

"Three days' journey! Three days! Ah, then, the manuscript which we were so quick to receive as a herald of salvation is of no value. We cannot live and endure the toil of a three days' Arctic journey with only one day's food!" observed one of the seamen.

"It may seem hopeless, but the attempt to find the Spanish privateer must be made," replied the captain.

"Hark!" at that juncture exclaimed Tom Barton.

Silence fell immediately.

All hands bent their heads and listened with the utmost eagerness.

Faintly a shout, evidently uttered at a distance by a human voice, reached them.

Tom Barton sprang to the entrance of the ice hut and looked out.

He saw a boat, rowed by one man, approaching from the south through the open channel.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! It's Martin Bradway, the mad boatswain!" shouted the lad, gladly, as he recognized the solitary occupant of the boat.

He rushed out of the ice hut, and the others followed, shouting loudly.

Bradway evidently saw and heard them, for he rowed swiftly to the edge of the solid ice in front of the ice hut.

Willing hands grasped the boat and drew it up in safety upon the ice, and there ensued an interval of wild, almost delirious joy as the poor famine-threatened castaways saw that the boat was well laden with food.

The maniac boatswain's story was quickly told. The events were so recent and his memory of them was so vivid, that his recital was not as incoherent as might have been expected.

As the captain had conjectured, the North Star had been freed from the ice by volcanic action which had opened the channel.

Meantime the mutineers, led by Brand, the escaped convict, had seized the ship. Bradway pretended to submit, and while the vessel was gotten under way and steered southward, the crew broached the spirit locker and a drunken spree began.

No one noticed Bradway, and he loaded the boat with provisions, launched it and escaped, determined to bring relief to those who had been left behind.

"The problem of securing food for the journey in search for the Spanish buccaneer is solved. Let us lose no time in setting out," advised the captain.

"Oh, if I only had my nautical instruments," he added, wistfully.

"They are here!" cried the mad boatswain. "I brought them off in my boat."

"If we are saved we shall owe our lives to you," the captain replied.

Half an hour later, having laden the sledge with the contents of Bradway's boat, the party began the long journey over ice and snow in search of the vessel that had been deserted in the ice a hundred years ago.

Toward night Esquimau Joe, who was in the lead with the sledge, suddenly halted his dog team and uttered a shout of alarm.

All hastened up to him, and pointing at a long line of ice hills ahead, he exclaimed:

"See—see! Talasks. The wild men! The savages of the far north! Dey kill us all!"

Then the castaways saw many ~~dark human forms~~ coming swiftly over the hills toward them.

"Men," he said, "yonder band is composed of the savages of the remote polar lands, who have for ages been the terror of the Esquimaux and more southern tribes. Closely allied to the savage tribes of North America, they somewhat resemble the Finlanders, however."

"They mean to attack us. See! They are waving their long spears and flourishing their bows," said Tom Barton.

"We shall have to fight. These polar savages are the enemies of all mankind, and utterly merciless," rejoined the captain.

The enemy was still a long distance off.

On account of the rarity of the atmosphere they appeared to be much nearer than they really were.

"Yonder is an elevation where we must make a stand," added the captain, as he pointed to the north.

The sledge was hurried on.

Esquimau Joe lashed the dogs, and the men pushed on the rear of the sledge to lighten the burden of the animals.

Fierce, wild yells, uttered in guttural tones, sounded on the hearing of the castaways presently.

And they saw the dark figures were racing toward them.

But the elevation was reached ahead of the wild men. The latter numbered probably two score, while the deserted band from the North Star consisted of but eight men, all told.

"We must heap up the loose ice! We must have some sort of a barricade against them," cried Captain Franklin, as soon as the ice elevation was reached.

The loose ice cakes were rolled in a circle on the summit of the elevation.

Behind the rude, ice breastworks the party crouched.

Fortunately they had brought their Winchester rifles with them from the brig. They leveled their weapons over the wall of ice, and waited for the charge of their strange enemies.

The latter, as they drew nearer, were seen to be taller and darker than the true Esquimaux. They were dressed in the skins of wild animals.

Their long spears were pointed with the sharpened points of the walrus and whale teeth, and they carried bows and arrows, tipped with bone, besides a sort of war-ax.

Behind the band of fighting men, could be seen a number of other savages, supposed to be women, who were in charge of a great many large sledges, drawn by reindeer.

There were conveyances enough to transport the entire party.

One sledge particularly attracted the attention of the castaways. It was larger than the others, and it had a canopy of reindeer skin over it, while it was drawn by a fine, double team of reindeer.

All at once a man of giant figure—much taller than the other Arctic savages, leaped out of the covered sledge.

At the same moment one of its skin curtains was thrown back, and, wonder of wonders, could the Americans believe their eyes, they beheld a young and beautiful white girl.

She extended her hands and signaled the whites on the ice hills in such a manner that they knew as well as if they had heard the words she evidently uttered, that she was entreating them to save her.

The hearts of the castaways went out to the beautiful girl, whom some cruel fate had made the captive of those wild men of the far north.

But they were powerless to aid her then.

The giant who had leaped from the great covered sledge immediately placed himself at the head of the Talasks.

And they came on to wild charge, while their fierce, guttural voices were uplifted in a horrible chorus.

They discharged arrows from their bows as they drew nearer. But the whites reserved their fire.

All at once Captain Franklin cried out:

"As I live! The giant leader of the Arctic savages is a white man—a European!"

Scarcely had the words in which the captain voiced this most amazing discovery passed his lips when a yell which was like a veritable explosion of long-pent-up rage and hate, burst from the lips of Martin Bradway.

The maniac boatswain cried:

"He is Nick Casquar, the Dane! The leader of the mutineers of the lost ship Forward!"

Not a moment was given the party to discuss this discovery.

The savages were too near to admit of a longer delay in attempting to repulse them.

"Fire!" ordered Captain Franklin.

Bang, bang, bang! All along the ice wall where the Tal-

CHAPTER V.

THE FIGHT ON THE HILL—THE MUTINEER KING OF THE SAVAGES.

Clearly the strange savages of the far north had discovered the castaways.

And the moment he heard the Esquimau give them the singular name Talasks, Captain Franklin knew he had the worst to fear.

asks were about to make an assault the Winchesters in the hands of the deserted ones sent forth their leaden rain of death.

The scene which ensued was one of horror. The savages dropped in their tracks all along their advancing line, and the spotless snow was crimsoned with their blood.

Awful yells and groans emanated from the wounded, and the mad charge was checked.

The line of fierce, dark-faced men wavered; they were not used to facing firearms.

Their giant leader had not been harmed. He sought to make his followers stand their ground.

But the attempt was vain. They turned and fled toward the sledges in the rear.

Nick Casquar, the mutineer—for he it really was—shook his clenched fist at the white men, and, like the unnatural renegade he was, shouted:

"Curse you all! I'll have your lives yet and your firearms. The one thing I need to make my reign among the Talasks supreme!"

Then he followed his men. He had reached his great covered sledge when suddenly the castaways saw the beautiful white girl, whom they had seen in the vehicle as she emerged from behind a hummock between the sledge and the hill.

She had evidently slipped out of Casquar's sledge and crept toward the position of the whites during the recent conflict.

At full speed she ran for the hill.

But, glancing into the sledge, Casquar wheeled about and saw the escaping maid.

He uttered a yell and sprang in pursuit of her, followed by a number of the savages.

"The white girl will be run down! Who will help me save her?" cried Jack Deering, recklessly leaping over the ice wall and darting toward the girl.

Captain Franklin, feeling in duty bound to stand by the son of his employer, followed, and so did Tom Barton and Martin Bradway, the mad boatswain.

"Come back! Come back!" shouted Captain Franklin to Jack.

But the lad did not heed him. He distanced all his followers, and the girl reached him. As she sank, half fainting at his feet, Casquar, coming close behind her, bounded at the boy.

Jack leveled his Winchester, and pulled the trigger.

The bullet whizzed by the head of the murderous mutineer. But he came on. Jack clubbed his weapon and struck madly at the giant.

The next moment the hand of the latter clutched his throat. Just then Captain Franklin reached the mutineer, but he came too late. The savages, who had followed the Dane, closed up around the girl captive, Jack, and the captain, and, overpowered, they were hurried away toward the sledges drawn by the reindeer.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DUPLICATE COPY OF THE STRANGE MANUSCRIPT.

Tom Barton and the maniac boatswain halted when they saw the savages close in about their two friends, who had considerably distanced them.

They realized that it would not only be foolhardy to advance further, but that such a procedure could result only in their capture.

"Heavens, what a terrible fate for Jack and the captain! The Talasks will hurry them away in these sledges to hopeless captivity, or put them to death," said Tom.

"They shall be saved!" cried the Arctic madman, wildly.

But he beat a retreat, and Tom accompanied him, as the savages showed signs of coming toward them.

Then men, who had at first hesitated about following their captain, had quitted the ice hill meanwhile and advanced.

Tom and Bradway soon met them.

"Apart from our natural sorrow, on account of the captain's fate for his own sake, his loss is the worst calamity that could have befallen us," said an old seaman, disconsolately.

"That's so, Hopkins," rejoined Tom. "For the captain is the only one among us who understands taking a lunar observation, and making the nautical calculation to tell where we are going, and so guide us to the Spanish buccaneer."

"Without the captain there is no hope of our ever finding the Spanish vessel, granting that it has remained intact, where it was deserted so long ago," observed Hopkins.

The party was completely disheartened.

And, as they presently saw the whole band of the strange Arctic savages enter their sledges, and driving their reindeers at full speed, disappear over the range of ice hills to the westward, carrying the captain and Jack Deering with them, they felt as if they had witnessed the departure of their last hope.

Slowly the abandoned men retraced their way to the ice-hill, and they decided to remain in camp there for the night at least.

An ice hut was built, and, while they worked, they discussed the strange circumstances which had just claimed their attention.

But no one could imagine how Nick Casquar, the mutineer of the *Forward*, the ship commanded by Tom's father, of which the party had been sent in quest, could have succeeded in making himself the chief of the Arctic tribe.

Certainly he was the only white man among the Talasks, and all wondered what had become of his evil comrades who had left Tom's father to his fate the year before.

Of the beautiful white girl's presence as Casquar's captive, they could only find an explanation by assuming she might have been rescued from some Arctic wreck by the savages.

Night soon came on, and presently it was discovered that Martin Bradway, the mad boatswain, had disappeared; no one had seen him go. He had evidently sought to take his departure secretly.

"Can it be?" suggested Tom, as all were trying to find an explanation for the absence of the survivor of the lost ship *Forward*, "that he has gone away, inspired with the mad determination to try to make good his vow that Captain Franklin should be saved?"

This idea was accepted, as there seemed no other explanation to be proposed.

Meantime, Captain Franklin and Jack Deering were meeting with thrilling experiences.

As soon as they were overpowered by Casquar's savage followers, the mutineer ordered them to be bound, placed in one of the sledges, and hurried away, as he commanded a general retreat.

His orders were carried out, and the unfortunate captain and the recklessly brave lad saw Casquar drag the shrinking white maid back to his sledge.

When the Talasks had crossed the ice hills they proceeded due north for some distance. But finally the long line of reindeer-drawn sledges was halted at a signal from Casquar, and preparations were brought before the mutineer, who sat in a rude tent of reindeer skins, which had been promptly erected.

He questioned them at some length.

They told a true story, save that, as a matter of policy, they refrained from mentioning that they had been sent in quest of the *Forward*.

Finally, at the mutineer's command, they were searched. Among other things, the handwriting—the strange manuscript they had found in the iceberg—was brought to light.

At the sight of it Casquar evinced the greatest excitement. He examined it hastily.

And, thrusting his hand into his bosom, he drew forth a package of parchment exactly like that which had been taken from Captain Franklin.

Unfolding it, he held it up before the dilating eyes of the astonished captain, and he saw it was an exact duplicate of the manuscript found in the iceberg.

Yes, strange fatality! Casquar had found the copy of the manuscript which its author had intrusted to his first mate a hundred years ago.

"Ha, ha! I understand now why you are traveling into the frozen north. You are hunting for the Spanish gold ship. You are after the prize I have sworn no man shall find save myself!" cried Casquar.

The captain was speechless.

Jack cried out:

"You infernal rascal. Then you read Spanish? I should not have thought it!"

Fifteen years in the Spanish navy ought to have given me a chance to learn the language. But, never mind that, captain, this manuscript has saved your life."

"How so?" demanded the man addressed.

"I was about to have you both put to death. I heard your men call you captain, so I am sure of your rank; and I am sure you have left your nautical instruments with your friends, and that you understand the use of them. I do not. I will spare your life if you will use your knowledge to make

observations and the necessary calculations to enable me to locate the Spanish gold ship. As for the boy, I want no rival, and he has taken too much interest in my pretty Elfirida. He shall die!"

"You rascal! You inhuman wretch! Even were I inclined to accept your proposal, which I am not, I could do nothing without my instruments," retorted Captain Franklin, sternly.

"You shall have them. It can only be a matter of a little time before all your followers are slain by the fierce, wild men with whom my will is law. They will never rest while there is one of your little party alive?" said Casquar, in tones of merciless conviction.

"For heaven's sake spare the boy!" groaned Captain Franklin, looking at Jack.

For answer Casquar stalked out of the shelter. The two prisoners were left there closely guarded. The night advanced. All at once they heard a strange sound at the door of the tent, where a huge savage stood. The next moment the tent flap was lifted and a dark figure stole within.

"Hist! It is I, Bradway!" breathed the man in a whisper, and the captain recognized the tones of the mad boatswain.

At that instant a wild yell rang out at the tent door.

"Quick! They have found the body of the savage I killed!" cried Bradway.

Drawing a huge knife such as the Arctic hunters carry, the maniac slashed an opening in the reindeer skin wall of the tent, severed the bonds which held the prisoners, and led them out of the shelter.

In the semi-gloom they saw a dozen dark forms surge toward them. They sprang away. But the voice of the white girl captive reached them just then, and they saw her coming toward them in a sledge, urging a magnificent reindeer that drew it at full speed.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ESCAPE AND PURSUIT.

The Talasks, so called by the Esquimaux, are really the Choukchi or Tchoukchi, a nation of wandering tribes, living mostly in the north of Siberia, akin to the Esquimaux and Samoides. They are noted for their warlike character.

And, in this respect, they are entirely different from the real Esquimaux, and more like the Indians of North America.

Captain Franklin and Jack Deering, escaping from the camp of the fierce northern wild men, knew that, if possible, the savages would seek to slay them, rather than allow them to slip through their hands.

Martin Bradway, the mad seaman, who led the captain and his boy comrades from the skin tent, uttered a wild yell as he saw the dark forms of the Talasks surging toward him.

It seemed to him the whole camp was alarmed.

And, truth to say, such was the fact.

The savage guard, whom the maniac boatswain had slain at the tent door, had been discovered.

And in the strange, mysterious, low-voiced moaning cries, peculiar to the savages, the news had been proclaimed.

If the alarm signals were heard by the escaping ones, they were taken for the voices of the wind, which wailed unceasingly over the icebound land the livelong night.

As the wild and thrilling yell of the Arctic maniac pealed forth, the loud detonation of a Winchester rifle which he carried reverberated afar.

Mingled with the report came a shriek of mortal agony from the foremost of the northern savages.

He dropped his long spear, which he had poised menacingly for a cast at the leader of the escaping trio.

And as the heavy weapon fell from his nerveless arm he pitched headlong into the snow, almost at the feet of Martin Bradway.

It was just previous to the moment of the mad boatswain's fatal shot, that, as stated, the voice of the beautiful white girl captive rang out, and that the three fugitives saw her coming toward them in a sledge, urging a magnificent reindeer attached to the vehicle, at full speed.

"This way, quick! Leap into the sledge and I will help you off!" cried the beautiful maiden, in urgent, ringing tones.

"Forward to the sledge!" shouted Jack.

The fall of the Talask whom Martin Bradway had shot had the effect to momentarily check the advance of the Arctic savages.

And they fell back as Bradway dashed forward, holding his rifle in readiness for another discharge.

Jack and Captain Franklin closely followed the lead of the mad boatswain.

Meanwhile the fair captive, whose presence among the wild men of the frozen zone seemed a strange mystery, had not ceased to urge the reindeer on with voice and whip.

The fugitives met the vehicle.

And leaping into it, while, too late to immediately foil them, the Talasks sought to close in about the vehicle, it dashed away. Two of the savages who had leaped at the head of the reindeer were overthrown by the wild rush of the animal under the stinging lash of the maiden sledge-driver.

"Where are your friends?" asked the fur-clad divinity, fixing her dark, luminous eyes on Jack, as she stood erect in the large sledge, looking like a veritable Arctic queen.

"Yonder. To the northeast!" replied the lad.

And with his outstretched hand he indicated the direction.

"We must reach them! But we shall be pursued? The fleetest reindeer in the tribe will be used. Casquar, the white king of the Talasks, will lead the chase. He has vowed to put me to death rather than lose me. Oh, save me! save me from that monster?" continued the girl.

"Rest assured we will do our best to defend you. But just now you are doing the saving. We owe our present liberty to your timely arrival with the reindeer," replied Jack, cheerfully.

"Ah, of course, I knew nothing of your escape until I saw you running from the skin tent in which you had been imprisoned for the night. I had eluded the vigilance of the Talask women who were at once my servants and my guards. In this sledge, drawn by one of the swiftest reindeer in all the Talasks' herds, I hoped, undetected, to get clear of the camp and reach your party," continued the maiden.

And all the time the racing reindeer flew over the smooth ice like the wind.

But the fugitives knew they were pursued.

Upon the night wind there was borne to their ears the hoarse voices of the Arctic savages.

And more than once the fierce and angry tones of the ex-mutineer, who was the leader of the pursuit, reached them.

Jack and his comrades turned anxious glances in the rear ever and anon.

Scudding over the ice and snow like swift racing boats on a sea of white, they could discern dark objects.

These latter soon took form and shape. They were, of course, the sledges of the pursuing savages.

One sledge, drawn by a single reindeer, whose size and beauty seemed to rival that of the swift-footed animal to whom the fugitives were indebted for escape thus far, led the van of the pursuers.

Martin Bradway, crouching in the rear of the sledge, kept his fierce, flashing eyes fixed upon the leading vehicle of the enemy.

He held his rifle across his knees.

Looking at him, his comrades understood, without the need of words, that he meant to check the leader of the pursuit as soon as he came within rifle range.

The night soon began to lighten, as the low dull leaden clouds drifted north, and soon the maniac seamen was heard to exclaim fiercely:

"Ha! As I thought! It is he!" Martin Bradway raised his Winchester to his shoulder as he added:

"Nick Casquar shall die! I have sworn it a hundred times since he led the mutineers of the Forward. Since he robbed the captain and those of the ship's crew who were faithful of the last morsel of food, and left them to die!"

The preternatural power of vision with which it almost seemed his bitter hatred had endowed him enabled him to make out one or two men, who alone occupied the pursuing sledge which had distanced the other vehicles of the Talasks.

Elfirida, the beautiful waif, to give her the name we have heard Nick Casquar bestow, glanced keenly at the sledge alluded to.

"Yes. It is he, Casquar, and his companion is a chief of the Arctic men, noted as a warrior, and the right hand man of the white villain," she said.

Then she gave her entire attention to guiding the reindeer, and in seeking to make the animal attain an even greater rate of speed.

But still the sledge of Casquar gained.

Recklessly the white chief of the Arctic band drew nearer and nearer. He was assuming a great risk. His band was not near enough to render him immediate assistance.

At last he was within certain rifle shot.

The mad boatswain uttered a low, exultant exclamation, and while the memory of all that man had caused himself and his companions to suffer rushed upon his disordered brain, he took aim at the mutineer.

But at that critical moment the sledge Bradway occupied struck an ice hummock, and it was almost overturned.

The man seaman's rifle exploded.

But of course the bullet went wide of the human target.

Bradway and the other escaping ones narrowly escaped being hurled from the vehicle.

The sledge righted itself, however, and swept on.

Casquar, seemingly to have suddenly awakened to the danger from a shot from the fugitives, pulled up his reindeer.

While the ex-mutineer waited for his savage followers to come up, the escaping party gained rapidly. And by the time the pursuit was again inaugurated they began to entertain strong hopes of reaching the barricade on the ice hill, where the rest of the castaways of the North Star were in camp.

And it was decreed this hope, at least, should be realized.

The camp was finally sighted, and a shout went up from the fugitives, which was answered from the ice fort on the hill.

The camp was quickly reached. Soon after entering the camp the girl, whose name she said was Elfrida Warnose, told her story.

One day while a number were out exploring on sleds, Elfrida being with them, a fierce snowstorm sprang up and they retreated to a large, mysterious looking ice-hut, which proved to be uninhabited.

CHAPTER VIII.

BATTLE WITH THE BEARS—VOICE WITHOUT THE HOUSE OF ICE.

The storm raged for many hours.

Meantime, a small quantity of coal was found in a pit in the floor of the middle room of the ice-palace.

With this a fire was made in the stove and coffee was boiled and the provisions were brought from the sledge. Then the party ate with more comfort and enjoyment than they had known since they were abandoned in the frozen seas.

There were many conjectures as to the probable identity of the builders of the Arctic dwelling.

But not a single scrap of writing or anything to tell their identity was found.

However, Captain Franklin entertained a certain hope that some clue might be found in the cairn.

But that could not be explored until the terrible snowstorm abated.

The presence of the things found in the ice house, which were articles always coveted by the wandering tribes of Esquimaux and other natives, was proof that the ice palace had not been discovered by them.

When at last the storm was passed, all the party, save the young girl, whom a cruel destiny had decreed must share the perils and sufferings from which strong men shrank, went outside of the ice dwelling.

Then they came across a cairn, which is made to store food for further use.

And the task of breaking into the cairn was immediately commenced.

A number of boxes of provisions were at first unearthed.

They were in good condition.

And Captain Franklin exclaimed:

"This food is a prize more to be valued by us than gold."

The food was transferred to the ice house and the work of further exploring the cairn went on.

Finally a tin box was found.

The tin box was opened, and within it was found a paper, quite damp with moisture.

Captain Franklin seized it eagerly and read as follows aloud:

"Captain Barton, of the ship Forward, discovered this deserted ice house Nov. 13, 18—."

"What! my captain here! Ha! this is news. Where can he have gone?" roared Martin Bradway.

Tom was intensely excited.

"It is my dear lost father's handwriting!" he exclaimed, as he looked at the message found in the cairn.

"And the presence of food stored here is an evidence that your father, wherever he may have gone, meant to return."

"Yes, yes."

He may merely have gone with his companions on an expedition of some sort, the object of which we cannot conjecture. He must have made a wonderful journey from 83 degrees, north latitude."

"Thank heaven for this clue!" cried Tom.

And in his joy he danced about wildly.

Bradway was scarcely less excited.

He kept repeating over and over again:

"Captain Barton here! Captain Barton was alive on the thirteenth of November!"

Nothing more was found in the cairn.

And the party held a consultation.

"The additional food supply seems to warrant our remaining here for a time in the hope that Captain Barton may return," finally decided the captain.

This decision was hailed with delight by all, and Tom said:

"While we remain here there is nothing to prevent our scouting in every direction."

"No, indeed. And we will do that!"

"The fleet reindeer will serve us well."

"Yes. But do not allow your hopes of making further discoveries to soar too high."

"I shall not."

"And remember the snowstorm has hidden our trail, and we have eluded Casquar and his band at least for the time."

"Yes, and all impatient as I am to seek for further clues to what has become of my father, I suppose it is not best that we should venture from the ice house for a time."

"No. Let us remain close here until the band of Casquar may have time to conclude we have perished in the terrible storm, and leave the neighborhood."

The snowfall had almost covered the house of ice.

But passages were dug through the drifts, and no attempt was made to remove more of the snow than was necessary to get in and out.

The house was now even more likely to escape discovery than when it was found by the castaways.

Of course the red flag on the cairn had been removed, so there was nothing to attract any wandering natives to the neighborhood.

The sleep of the inmates of the ice house was disturbed the following night.

Tom Barton was awakened by a strange sound.

He started up and listened.

There was a repetition of the sound.

It came from above his head, and it did not take the lad more than a moment to decide it was the growling of a bear.

The other inmates of the house were awakened. The growling increased, and there came a sound of scratching on the ice walls.

It seemed as if there were a number of bears without seeking to force their way in.

Jack Deering and Tom proposed to take their rifles, slip out, and get a shot at the bears.

"Take care, boys! Don't be foolhardy. The bears are half starved. They have scented the food we have here, and they may be extremely dangerous to encounter," admonished Captain Franklin.

So the lads did not venture out.

Indeed, a sortie would have been useless. The bears continued to prowl about, growling and scraping the walls with their enormous claws.

It seemed they would succeed in getting in, for they had the strength to tear down the walls if they persisted.

Bradway scooped out a porthole in the wall, using a harpoon and hatchet.

But he had barely thrust his rifle through the opening when it was seized and wrenched from his hand before he could press the trigger.

Then the harpoon was heated in the fire and thrust through the hole and worked to enlarge it. The melting snow hissed and spluttered.

Two bears approached, but, having touched the hot iron, they fell back.

Before they got out of range Tom and Jack, who were ready for them, fired.

Terrible howls announced that both bears were hit.

"Let's give them a meal of gunpowder," said Hopkins.

"How do you mean?" asked Captain Franklin.

"Why, put some of our blasting cartridges in some food and touch them off when the bears pounce upon the provender."

"A good idea, and we'll try it."

A quantity of pemmican was put in a bag, with several cartridges, intended for use in blasting ice, a fuse was attached to the mouth of the bag and the end left in the ice house, while one of the ice blocks was knocked out of the window and the bag thrust through the opening.

Five bears pounced on the bag when they scented the meat it contained.

Captain Franklin touched fire to the fuse.

The bears were fighting and snarling over the prize they had found, when the fire went hissing along the fuse to the cartridges.

Then came an explosion.

The house was shaken.

Through the window the inmates of the ice house saw three of the bears lying dead.

The two others were severely wounded, and a couple of shots from the rifles of Tom and Jack at once put the huge beasts out of their misery.

The detonation of the rifles had barely died away when a ringing shout sounded from without the ice house. It was a human voice. Someone was coming—but who? There was a moment of intense and thrilling suspense.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STRANGE ESQUIMAU.

In profound silence the inmates of the ice palace listened for a repetition of the shout which had reached them from without.

After a brief interval the voice was again heard.

And then it was noted that the tones were harsh and guttural.

And the language was strange.

The two boy members of the expedition were unable to understand a word.

Tom Barton exclaimed:

"It's a Talask!"

"No! No!" cried Elfrida.

During her captivity among the fierce Northern savages, of whom Casquar had made himself the king, the girl had, naturally enough, acquired some knowledge of the peculiar dialect of the strange race.

"Him Esquimau. Hi! yi! Joe know!" shouted the dog driver.

And every one of the devoted little band of castaways experienced a sense of relief.

"I hope you are right, Joe!" said Captain Franklin.

"Yes, for discovery by Casquar's followers now would defeat all our hopes," remarked Hopkins, the old seaman.

Martin Bradway—the man boatswain of the lost ship Forward—had been looking intently through the opening in the wall of ice, through which the rifle volley had been discharged at the bears.

"Ho, ho!" he suddenly cried. "Esquimau Joe is right! See, see! It is a man of his race who has discovered us!"

Every one thronged to the porthole.

And eager glances from anxious eyes were at once directed in the direction which Bradway indicated by extending his right hand.

"I see him!" exclaimed Jack.

"So do I," cried Tom.

"Yes, yes! A solitary Esquimau!" said Captain Franklin.

"The report of our rifles drew him here," Bradway commented.

"It must be so," assented Captain Franklin.

"Otherwise he would not have known of our presence. The drifted snow renders the ice lodge, apparently, but a natural component part of the monotonous Arctic landscape," he added.

"See, he has halted," said Tom.

"He seems afraid to come nearer," replied Jack.

"Yes, the report of firearms has warned him that we are an armed force. These Esquimaux—many of them—know the death-dealing qualities of rifles."

"Let's reassure him," proposed Tom.

"Certainly. The Esquimaux are always the foes of their hereditary enemies, the Talasks or Choukchi," replied the captain.

"And therefore our friends?"

"Yes."

"Joe!" called the captain.

"Aye! me here!"

"Shout to your tribesman."

"Hi! yi! What say?"

"Tell him to come in; say he has nothing to fear."

"Hi! yi! me do dat!"

Esquimau Joe crept to the door.

It was opened.

Then the little native crawled out, and in a moment he stood revealed above the snowdrifts about the walls of the strange Arctic dwelling.

At the sight of him the native, who had halted as if afraid to make a nearer approach, uttered a shout of surprise.

Joe replied.

Speaking in his own language he said something which evidently satisfied the new arrival that his fears were groundless.

He replied in the Esquimau tongue.

Then he came on, and while he advanced a conversation was carried on between himself and Joe.

Soon the strange Esquimau reached the ice house.

And he followed Joe, who immediately led him inside.

Then it was seen that he was a typical native of the tribe to which Joe belonged.

Clad from head to foot in fur, he looked like an animated bundle of pelts. His short, squatty figure was not at all graceful, but a pair of keen, intelligent little eyes sparkled under his fur hood.

Captain Franklin shook hands with the strange wanderer, and he said:

"It seems strange that he should be alone. Question him, Joe."

"Me do dat."

"And particularly seek to ascertain if he knows anything about the survivors of the Forward."

"Ay, cappen."

Joe then began to jabber away at a great rate in the Esquimau tongue.

And the strange native replied with equal volubility!

All hands listened eagerly.

Martin Bradway kept his fierce eyes fixed on the Esquimau.

The son of the lost captain of the Forward experienced most suspenseful solicitude.

Yet he scarcely dared allow himself to hope that the Esquimau would give any intelligence of the father whom he had come to seek for amid Arctic dangers.

For some time the conversation went on between Joe and the strange native.

Then Joe said to the Americans in his peculiar broken English:

"Him say he got lost from people in big snow and um say Talasks over yonder."

Joe pointed to the southwest.

"Ha! Then the mutineer king of the savages has no doubt successfully trailed us until the storm came," said Captain Franklin.

"Aye, cappen."

"What does he say about the lost ship? You have put the inquiries I suggested?"

"Yes, me ask 'bout dat. Him say no. No see, no know about any ship or any men from ship hereabouts. Me think um lie!" replied Joe, positively.

"What's that, Joe?"

And Captain Franklin looked the surprise he experienced at the last abrupt and somewhat startling assertion.

"Me say think um lie."

"Why so, Joe? What object can this friendly fellow have in deceiving us? Surely you do not suspect he is in league with Casquar?"

"No."

"What then?"

Before Joe could reply, Martin Bradway startled all hands by uttering a fierce cry.

And then he leaped upon the strange Esquimau, caught him by the throat and hurled him to the ground.

The Esquimau yelled and struggled.

"Martin! Martin! Why this violence?" expostulated Captain Franklin.

For answer, the mad boatswain of the lost ship tore a gold chain from about the neck of the strange Esquimau and brought to light a gold watch attached to it which was concealed under the fellow's furs.

A cry of surprise escaped the lips of the spectators.

And Martin Bradway cried excitedly:

"I will kill him! Ho, ho! He has stolen this watch and chain, I know it!"

"Do you recognize the watch?" asked Captain Franklin.

"Yes. It belonged to Paul Decker."

"Ha! One of the survivors of the Forward."

"Yes. One of the men who were true to Captain Barton, and whom I left with him."

"When you were abandoned by the mutineers?"

"Yes. When we were in latitude 83 degrees, north."

"Then Joe was right?"

"Yes."

"This rascally Esquimau has lied. But, Martin, it would be folly to execute vengeance upon him. Don't you see we must make him tell all. How he came by the gold watch. Surely he can, if he will, tell us something about your lost comrades of the Forward and Captain Barton."

"Yes," cried Tom, clutching the arm of Bradway, "you must spare him! Think! this man may give us the clew we want—he may put us on the right trail of my father!"

"Right, boy—right! Martin will not kill him. But when I saw my old shipmate's chain on his neck the blood got into my head and I saw red. Ho, ho! I wanted to kill him. The wind whispered to me to do it. The voices that are always with me said he killed Decker," said the maniac.

"Perhaps not."

"No. He may have come by the watch in some way which we do not suspect," said Captain Franklin. "At all events, let him up at once," he added.

There was a ring of command in the tones of the captain.

Perhaps from force of habit, since the best part of his life had been spent on shipboard, where the orders of the commanding officer is law, the Arctic madman obeyed.

In a moment the strange Esquimau bounded to his feet.

CHAPTER X.

NEWS OF THE SURVIVORS OF THE FORWARD AT LAST.

For a moment the native whom Martin Bradway had so roughly handled glared about him wildly.

And he turned toward the door.

If he had meditated making a dash to escape what he saw must have completely disconcerted him.

His kins and Jack Deering, rifles in hand, guarded the way of exit.

"Come, Joe. Tell him he must make a clean breast of it," said Captain Franklin to the dog driver.

"Me do dat."

"Explain that we have recognized the watch and chain."

"Hi yi!"

"And tell him he must make known how he came by it."

"All right."

"Warn him he is in peril of his life."

"Ay, ay, cappen, an' me tell him he be killed quick if um tell lies."

"That's it."

Joe turned to the strange Esquimau.

For a moment he spoke to him earnestly.

The other replied.

And those who were watching his face thought he spoke with sincerity.

"Me asked where he got watch an' chain. Um say found 'em on dead seaman," said Joe.

"Dead! Poor Decker! Poor shipmate! Ho! Ho! That is one more life Casquar, the mutineer, has to answer for. Ho! The time will come when Martin will execute a terrible vengeance," cried the maniac boatswain.

And, drawing his great sheath-knife from his belt, he flourished it in a way which seemed to terrify the strange Esquimau, for he sprang behind Joe as if for protection.

"Be calm, Martin. Don't get excited! You will frighten the native so he will fear to speak as we desire," Captain Franklin admonished.

Bradway put up his knife, and Joe again spoke to his tribesman.

As before, the latter answered promptly and with seeming sincerity.

Then Joe made known what he had said.

"Him tell me, he found de dead seaman at foot of big ice mountain, two days north," stated the dog driver.

"The particulars," urged Captain Franklin.

After the two Esquimaux had again jabbered together for some moments, Joe said:

"Him say, dead man was at bottom of ice ledge, in snow. Him think he fell from ledge. Him saw tracks of three men, going up the mountain. He thinks companions of dead man cross over ice range."

"That may be. The poor fellow whom the Esquimau found may have broken his neck in a fall from the ice ledge. Anyhow, it is good luck we have come upon this news," said the captain.

"Yes, yes. And this native must guide us now," cried Tom Barton.

The devoted boy was ready to brave any future peril in the quest of his lost father.

"Yes, certainly; the native must lead us to the place where he discovered the dead body of the comrade of your father."

"And thanks to the supplies we found here, we have no immediate fear of hunger."

"No. Our journey can be prolonged for several days more than we at first deemed possible."

"It may be there is the invisible hand of a kind Providence in all this."

"Quite true, my lad."

Then to Joe:

"The Esquimau must guide us to the ice mountain and show us where he found Decker. Tell him so."

"Aye, aye, cappen!"

The dog driver hastened to translate Captain Franklin's demand.

And the Esquimau, in his own language, readily promised to do as he desired.

After a brief consultation it was decided to abandon the ice palace, which had sheltered the little party so well at the time of their greatest need.

Preparations were made for resuming the march toward the north pole and the treasure ship, whose location was revealed by the handwriting in the iceberg.

It was now clear that it would no longer avail to seek to locate Captain Barton and the other survivors of the Forward with him at 83 degrees north latitude.

That the abandoned ones were on the move, that they had long since left the location in which Martin Bradway had left them was regarded as proven.

The quest now seemed likely to become an entirely uncertain and wandering one.

But it seemed the lost captain and his comrades had gone in the direction of the Spanish treasure ship.

So in seeking to follow the trail of the Arctic exiles the party of Captain Franklin were not as yet called upon to abandon the course to the gold privateer from the Spanish main.

Captain Franklin got out his nautical instruments.

And then, as soon as possibly, he took an observation and calculated the course.

Meantime, the others packed the dog and reindeer sledges with the supplies.

And an hour or so after the arrival of the strange Esquimau, the party left the ice house.

All felt as if they were abandoning an old friend, and in their hearts they were not without misgivings.

Elfirida acted as a girl sledge driver, and she managed the reindeer skillfully.

Jack and Tom rode in the reindeer sledge with her.

So did Captain Franklin.

The others went with Esquimau Joe and the dog sledge.

The latter vehicle took the lead.

The strange guide rode beside Joe.

And he pointed out the route.

The two Esquimaux meanwhile kept a sharp lookout for the band of Nick Casquar.

And, of course, the other members of the party did the same.

The first day's journey was completed without the occurrence of any special incident. Only the usual hardships of Arctic travel were experienced. The weather became colder, but there was no snow.

As the party advanced the landscape changed, and none of the Americans had ever even imagined there was such wild and picturesque scenery in the Arctic regions.

Strange and beautiful scenes of ice-covered land were found here and in the distance there remained

formations looked like the spires and minarets of a great city.

That they were traveling where the foot of a white man had seldom, if ever, save in the case of Captain Barton's party, trodden, all knew.

And they were convinced they were skirting along on the mainland of the Arctic continent, with the frozen sea in sight.

The second day was drawing to a close when a mighty peak of the Arctic range came in sight.

Then the strange Esquimau uttered a shout.

Pointing ahead, he said to Joe in his own language:

"There is the great mountain. There is the place where I found the dead white seaman. We shall find him again if the bears have not gotten ahead of us."

"On! On! Let us reach the great Arctic peak before we halt!" cried Tom, excitedly, when Joe had translated the remark of the strange native.

At increased speed the dogs and the reindeer were urged forward until the party finally arrived at the foot of the towering mountain indicated by the native guide.

CHAPTER XI.

DEADLY FOES FACE TO FACE.

Elfrida, Joe and Hopkins were left with the sledges at the foot of the mountain.

Then, led by the strange Esquimau, the rest of the party advanced on to a defile.

It led along one side of the mountain, which was really the supreme monarch in respect to height and size of the entire range.

Above the heads of the mountain, which was really the and a trail leading up the mountainside from the edge of the wild defile was found.

These footprints were eagerly inspected by Martin Bradway.

Then he cried out:

"Ho, ho! Captain Barton was alive not long ago; for I can pick out his footprints by old Clay, a bad hand at cobbling; but now I am glad of the fact since it enables me to identify the imprints."

Tom Barton felt happy enough to hug Bradway for making the assurances his words conveyed.

"Come! Let's follow the trail. Let's go on up the wild heights. Where my father and his brave, devoted comrades have dared to venture, we will not fail to follow," cried the boy.

"Wait—wait! Let us first seek for the body of Decker," said Captain Franklin.

"Yes, by all means!" cried Jack.

And even Martin Bradway assented.

So they went on into the defile.

Suddenly the Esquimau guide halted.

He was directly under a projecting ledge, a hundred feet above his head.

He indicated an object a little further on.

Martin Bradway sprang forward, and he was the first one to reach the object.

"Ho, ho! It is Decker!"

So he shouted.

Then he fell on his knees beside the fur-clad body of a man, which lay half buried in the snow.

The others quickly gathered around.

The body was reverently lifted and carried out of the defile. On a great flat rock at the entrance of the pass, where it seemed the unfortunate man had fallen to his death, the remains were deposited.

Then the garments were searched.

A piece of tobacco, a pipe, some twine, a jack-knife and a small pocket-knife, with a few leaves for accounts in it, was all that was found in Decker's pockets.

Captain Franklin opened the pocketbook.

It was empty, save for a long ringlet of golden hair tied with a bit of ribbon—a memento of wife or sweetheart, perhaps.

But there was something on the leaves of the book, although they were mostly filled with accounts.

With the utmost interest Captain Franklin read aloud what was written in the book.

And it is needless to say that all his hearers listened with rapt attention.

The memorandum ran as follows:

"Captain Barton has decided to attempt to cross the range. We fear the band of Talasks, whom Casquar has hunted us with. The mutineer fears we may escape, and he evidently means to foil every attempt we make to elude his human bloodhounds. If he ever returns to civilization he does not intend that we shall live to bear witness against him.

"Thanks to the large store of supplies we found in the ice palace, we are provisioned for a long journey, and Captain Barton hopes to reach some Siberian settlement."

That was all.

But it told a whole story of vindictive, demoniacal conduct on the part of Casquar.

After he became supreme among the Talasks, he had, it seemed, set out to hunt down the men he had abandoned, in the fear they might escape, to one day appear against him.

The body of Decker was buried in the snow.

Then the party held a consultation.

But suddenly Joe came dashing up to the mouth of the defile in his dog sledge.

And Elfrida and Hopkins, in the reindeer sledge, followed him.

"What has occurred?"

"Is there new danger?"

So cried Tom and Jack in a breath.

"Yes. We saw a Talask," replied the girl waif.

"Where?" asked Tom.

"To the south. Two of the Arctic savages appeared on the crest of an ice hill. We were pretty well sheltered, and I do not think we were seen."

"But the presence of two of the Talasks may be accepted as evidence that Casquar and his band are coming. The men you saw were probably his advance scouts," said Captain Franklin.

"Yes," assented the girl.

"Then let us retreat into the pass. I dreaded a snowstorm a moment since, now I pray for one, since the white flakes alone can obliterate our trail," the captain replied.

"Why not follow father's trail? Must we abandon it?" groaned Tom.

"To go up the mountain now would be to expose ourselves to certain discovery by the Talask scouts."

"That's so."

"The pass is our only possible avenue of escape."

"Yes. In it there is a bare chance. We may escape the foe."

A moment later the party was advancing along the narrow gloomy way as rapidly as the nature of the ground would admit.

On and on they went, until the reindeer and the dogs were exhausted. Then a halt was made.

No signs of pursuit had been detected since the flight through the pass began.

But, for all that, gloomy forebodings filled the hearts of the castaways.

They knew that even then the Talasks might be stealing after them. If it was still the policy of Casquar to have them unwittingly lead him to the gold ship of the Spanish buccaneers, he probably would not attack them.

But, in the end, their doom was clearly assured if the mutineer trailed them.

"We must not wear out our animals, come what may. We are now compelled to halt to rest the reindeer and the dogs and feed them," said Captain Franklin.

"Right," assented Martin Bradway.

And while Esquimau Joe and his tribesman looked at the dogs, Bradway said:

"I will go back and gather some of the moss, of which the reindeer is so fond. I saw some as we came along."

"All right! But do not go far, and if you see any signs of Casquar's band, do not fail to bring us immediate warning," replied the captain.

Taking a skin bag with him to hold the reindeer moss, which appeared about the snow and exposed rocks and mounds, Bradway set off without delay.

He carried his rifle slung from his shoulder.

And his huge dirk-knife was in his belt.

The little party watched the mad boatswain out of sight, and then they fell to conversing about their situation.

The maniac of the Arctic seas went swiftly along the back trail for some distance.

Here and there he paused to gather the tender moss of which he was in search.

And Bradway seemed preoccupied the while. He muttered to himself and occasionally gesticulated wildly. All at once as he turned a sharp curve in the defile he came face to face at a distance of not more than fifty feet with a herculean man.

For one single instant Bradway glared at the other, then he uttered a yell like the roar of some maddened wild beast and shouted the name:

"Nick Casquar!"

At last the mutineer and the mad boatswain stood face to face alone in the wild Arctic defile.

As Martin Bradway shouted the name of his deadly foe there came a tremendous crash behind Casquar. A huge mass of ice had fallen from the heights above and blocked the pass.

"Ho! Ho! I have you at last! Now, Nick Casquar, it is your life or mine!" yelled the maniac boatswain.

CHAPTER XII.

MARTIN BRADWAY A PRISONER.

It was a fateful moment. The life of one of the two men thus strangely met in the wild defile of that far Arctic land surely seemed destined to be sacrificed to the most powerful passions of human nature—hate and vengeance.

The foes were equally prepared for the impending strife.

Casquar was armed with a rifle and knife, and we have seen that Martin Bradway carried the same kind of weapons.

After the first wild, fierce utterance with which the mad boatswain greeted the discovery of the mutineer chief of the northern savages, the two men glared at each other for an instant.

Then with a prompt unity of action, as if an unseen second had given the signal for the inauguration of a deadly duel, the rifles of the two men sprang to their shoulders.

At fifty feet it seemed improbable that either could miss his human target.

There was a shadow of pallor on the swarthy face of Casquar.

But his arms were steady.

Bang!

Bang!

The reports of the two rifles sounded as one discharge.

A terrible cry rang from the lips of Martin Bradway, awakening a thousand echoes from frozen walls of the Arctic defile.

And while yet those sounds reverberated along the icy heights above, the mad boatswain fell headlong upon the earth.

Casquar stood unharmed, though he reeled for a moment.

He wore a breastplate of bone and reindeer hide which was impervious to a bullet.

Bradway had aimed at his heart.

The primitive armor had turned the leaden ball.

A yell of exultation, of triumph, pealed from the lips of Casquar.

He sprang toward his fallen foe.

At the same time a chorus of yells sounded from beyond the ice fall, which had blocked the defile in the rear of the mutineer.

And over the barricade thronged a score of the dark-faced savage Talasks who had made Casquar their chief.

Upon reaching Bradway, Casquar fell upon his knees.

He felt the body of the fallen man.

Then he shouted:

"He lives! He is not dead!"

He saw blood trickling down Bradway's face from his forehead and temples.

And in a moment he satisfied himself that his bullet had merely grazed the skull of his enemy, and knocked him senseless, without inflicting a fatal or even serious wound.

Instantly the mutineer flashed forth his sheath knife.

He poised the murderous-looking blade above the heart of the man who lay at his mercy, unable to make even a single plea for his life.

It seemed that Bradway was doomed.

But no; the expression of Casquar's face suddenly changed with the reflection of a new thought which had permeated his vindictive brain.

He put up his knife.

Then he turned to his savage followers.

In their own guttural language he addressed them.

Casquar issued an order.

It was as follows:

"Bind him securely. We will keep him a captive."

And he added, while the Talasks hastened to carry his order into execution:

"This man shall serve as a hostage. Yes, I will keep him to use as a means to again secure the girl I have sworn to make mine.

"Life is as dear to him as to other men," he went on; "and when he realizes that he is at my mercy I think he will do as I desire in order to save himself."

The trail of the castaways was clearly revealed in the pass.

There was of course nothing to prevent Casquar's band pressing on.

They had only to advance swiftly and they would soon reach the party under the leadership of Captain Franklin.

The Talasks seemed eager to continue on the trail.

But Casquar restrained them.

"No, no. We must not attack the white men. You will not approach too near. They must not discover us. I am determined they shall guide me to the treasure-ship. Ah, when they have found it we will come down upon them and kill! Not one shall be spared, save the white girl who is to be my wife," he said.

There were some mutterings.

But Casquar was obeyed.

This incident served to show how completely he had obtained the ascendancy over those savage men.

In a few moments the buccaneer sent forward two Talasks to serve as scouts.

They were instructed to note the positions of the castaways, and then return to the main band and report.

And Casquar particularly cautioned the two Talasks to be wary, and not to reveal their presence.

The scouts set off on the trail at once.

Then Casquar ordered Bradway to be carried back on the trail. The insensible man was lifted by four of the savage Arctic men.

And while Casquar led the way, the whole band set out on the return.

They clambered over the ice fall.

Then they went on rapidly.

And they soon reached the rest of the band, who had been left in charge of the reindeer sledges.

Casquar had sent out scouts, since the snow storm, while he advanced northward.

As he knew the treasure ship lay somewhere in that direction, he reasoned that the castaways would take that course.

Unfortunately for Captain Franklin's party, the scouts of Casquar found his trail.

Then they hastened to rejoin the main body.

An advance was made with all speed.

The result we have described.

As soon as the reindeer sledges were reached, Martin Bradway, who was still insensible, was placed in one of them.

Then the white chief led the way south a short distance, and finally the entire party entered a defile where they could not be seen, save on a close approach.

There a temporary camp was made.

Casquar was conversing with two of the Talask chiefs when he heard a wild yell from the sledge in which Martin Bradway lay.

The next moment the mutineer saw the mad boatswain start up in the sledge.

He had regained his senses.

And he was making a desperate struggle to liberate himself from the thongs with which his captors had bound him.

But he had fettered with great care, and his efforts at self-liberation failed.

He raved and shouted.

But all was vain.

Casquar approached him.

There was the evil smile of an exultant demon on the face of the mutineer.

Seeing him Bradway burst out with renewed frenzy.

"Ho, ho! So you have me! You infernal rascal. The evil one must protect his own. I shot to kill. My weapon did not fail! My bullet went true, yet you live! Yes, yes! The foul fiend stopped the death missile."

For answer Casquar showed his primitive breastplate.

"You see I was prepared. Now, then, you know you have nothing but death to expect at my hands," he said.

"Yes, I know that."

"But you can save your life."

"How?"

"I will explain."

"You are only trifling with me. It is not in your nature to show mercy to a foe."

"You shall see."

"Say on."

"The white girl, who escaped from me, is with your band yet?"

"She is."

"I want her."

"You will never recapture her while one of my brave comrades live to defend her."

"You shall deliver her to me!"

"Never!"

"You will do so—or die!"

"Ho, ho! Martin Bradway prefers death to dishonor. You traitor! You traitor! You fiend! Do your worst, but never make a proposition like that to me. I will never prove a traitor to my friends!" cried the mad boatswain.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MUTINEER'S PROPOSITION.

"Listen! You must hear what my proposition is. I will release you, unharmed, provided you swear you will deliver Elfirida to me. Refuse, and you seal your own doom."

"You have my answer," replied Bradway.

But, without heeding him, the mutineer continued:

"I know you are a man of your word. I know you will not break a vow once you have taken it; therefore, I am not afraid to trust you."

"It's useless. I'm only a poor seaman, but I would not purchase my life at the price you demand though I were a king and life held all the joys and pleasures of which one may dream for me."

"I do not accept that answer as final."

"You may as well do so."

"I will give you time to think."

With that Casquar stole away.

And the mad boatswain was left alone to his bitter reflections.

Not long after that the two scouts whom Casquar had sent forward through the defile came in, with the report that the castaways were at a short distance from where Martin Bradway had been captured.

"Good! If they come in quest of Bradway, a few of you will show yourselves and frighten them off. They will ultimately press on again for the treasure ship," said Casquar.

"They may meet the others," said one of the Talasks.

"Ah! you mean the white men we have hunted so long. The men who have eluded us as if the fates conspired to serve them."

"Yes."

"I hope they may not find Captain Barton, and I do not think they will. His party went over the mountain. The trail we found shows that."

"Why not send a party after the white men who went over the mountain?"

"I mean to do so, Bancar. Do you take ten of your tribe and track Captain Barton. I think you will likely enough find them dead in the snow."

"Because they have no food?"

"Yes. I believe all their supplies—though they had enough from the Forward to last for months—must be used up by this time."

Thus replied Casquar.

And his words showed that he was ignorant of the fact that Captain Barton had discovered the ice palace, erected by castaways unknown, who had, for some unexplained reason, abandoned it, and left behind a large quantity of provisions.

The Talask chief, with ten picked men, set out on the trail that led over the mountains, forthwith, and having stationed lookouts north of his camp, Casquar sought repose.

He was sleeping in a fur bag, sheltered by a tent or reindeer skin, when he was suddenly awakened.

A Talask appeared at the door.

"What is it?" demanded Casquar, springing up.

"The outposts have seen the white men of the band to which the prisoner belongs."

"Where are they?"

"Coming from the north."

"Good! Let my men, to the number of a score, show themselves."

The Talask bowed.

"But do not engage in a fight with the white men. Upon them we must depend to find the treasure ship, where we shall secure rich booty."

"I understand," replied the Talask.

Of course, the conversation was carried on in his own language, and the savage immediately withdrew.

"Could I but make the observations and the necessary calculations to find the treasure ship of which the handwriting in the iceberg revealed the secret, how quickly would I slay Captain Franklin and all his band," muttered the mutineer.

"Never afore did I so bitterly regret my lack of education as a navigator," he added.

Even the rude mutineer outlaw was forced to admit to himself the power of knowledge.

Some time elapsed.

Then the report of firearms reached the hearing of Casquar.

He rushed out of his tent.

Again the detonation of a volley rang out.

The sounds came from the north.

"Ha! There is fighting! Have the Talasks disobeyed me? Have they attacked the castaways? I must see!" the mutineer exclaimed.

Leaping into a reindeer sledge, he urged the animal attached to the vehicle northward as soon as he got clear of the pass, where the camp had been made.

In a few moments he reached a somewhat elevated ridge.

From the summit he was able to command quite an extended view.

And he saw the Talasks, who had gone forward, retreating slowly before the rock of Captain Franklin.

Immediately Casquar sent up the rallying yell of the Talasks.

And his entire force came from the defile.

As they swarmed upon the summits of the ridge where Casquar had halted his reindeer, they were visible to their comrades and Captain Franklin's party farther north.

And at once the castaways began a retreat.

The Talasks made a pretense of pursuing them.

But it was only a pretense.

The castaways disappeared in the defile where Martin Bradway was made a prisoner.

Then the band of Arctic men who had been sent to frighten the whites rejoined the main party on the summit of the ridge.

Of course, the comrades of the mad boatswain had heard the reports when Martin Bradway and Casquar fired at each other.

All were alarmed.

And after waiting a short time it was decided to cautiously go along the back trail in order to ascertain what had befallen Bradway.

Esquimaux Joe, his strange tribesman, and Hopkins were left with Elfirida and the sledge.

The others took the back trail.

They soon reached the place where Bradway and the mutineer had met in a singular duel. They saw bloodstains on the snow.

And filled with deep misgivings, they pressed on over the icefall.

The fact that the body of Martin Bradway was not found caused them to hope that he had not been slain.

Of course, the numerous tracks of the Talasks informed them that the foes they dreaded were near, and they decided that the mad boatswain had been taken prisoner.

In the hope that they might by some chance be of service to Bradway, the devoted little band pressed on until they sighted a small band of the Arctic savages. These were the men sent out to show themselves to the castaways. As the Talasks made a feint at a charge, the castaways promptly opened fire upon them.

What ensued has already been related.

After the castaways retreated into the pass they decided to make all haste to escape from the neighborhood.

All regretted the fate of Bradway.

But the appearance of the great force of Talasks on the summit of the ridge proved that it would be folly to attempt his rescue.

The sledges were soon reached.

Because of the theory already advanced by Captain Frank-

lin, of what he fancied might be the plot of Casquar's to find the treasure ship, the castaways were not surprised when they became convinced that they were not closely pursued.

As soon as they arrived at the sledges they entered them.

And on they sped through the wild pass in the lofty Arctic range.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FROZEN SCHOONER.

Some hours later Casquar again approached Martin Bradway.

Meantime the entire band of the Talasks had set out on the train of the castaways of the North Star.

Bradway, still securely bound, of course, was carried along in a sledge.

Casquar drew the sledge in which he rode alongside the one in which Martin Bradway lay.

And while the two vehicles continued in motion, the mutineer said:

"Now you have had time enough. I want your final answer. Will you betray the girl Elfirida into my power if I set you free?"

Bradway veiled his blazing eyes with his long lashes, and seemed to hesitate.

"Come, speak out!"

So urged the mutineer.

Thus urged, Bradway replied:

"After all, my life is of value to my friends. I can render them great assistance, and I swore never to give up the search for Captain Barton while a single hope that he might yet be alive remained."

"Well said. Then I infer you think better of your rash decision."

"Not to accept your terms?"

"Yes."

"I do."

Then let us fully understand each other."

"Certainly; state your plan freely."

"It is merely to set you free, give you a reindeer and sledge. You can then overtake your friends and tell them anything you like."

"To make them think I escaped?"

"Yes."

"And then?"

"In two days, at midnight, I will be very near the castaways. You will then surprise the girl and secretly abduct her from Captain Franklin's party and bring her to me. To prove I mean to act in good faith I will meet you alone. Of course I will be on the back trail of your party, and I shall certainly come in as close proximity to your party as I dare."

"I understand it all."

"And you will do as I have proposed?"

"I will."

"Swear it."

"I swear it!"

Martin Bradway raised his right hand solemnly.

"I am satisfied. I thought you loved life dearly enough to forget your boasted sentiments of honor and all that to save yourself."

Casquar spoke exultantly.

There was no reply. But, if the mutineer had looked into the half-closed eyes of the madman he would have seen an expression in their hidden depths which must have troubled him. Could it be that Martin Bradway was not a true man after all?

Was it possible he really meant to betray the girl waif into the power of Casquar?

If these questions had been put to Martin Bradway's old shipmates they would one and all have answered negatively.

They would probably have suggested that, with the deep cunning of a madman, in whose mania there was method, Martin Bradway was working out some counter plot against the evil scheme of the mutineer.

But only the future can show whether or not this was true.

Casquar, having obtained the consent of Bradway to serve him as he desired, lost no time in carrying out his part of the compact.

He ordered the Talasks to release the prisoner.

This was done, and then a sledge, drawn by a fleet reindeer, was brought forward.

And indicating the vehicle, Casquar said to the mad boatswain:

"This sledge is yours for the present. Depart at once, and remember, if you do not keep faith with me, in the end you will bitterly regret it."

Martin Bradway bowed assent.

Then he leaped into the sledge and urged the reindeer away.

In a short time he disappeared from the sight of the mutineer and his followers.

Bradway directed his course along the defile, which his comrades had traversed.

And his reindeer advanced swiftly until the icefall which blocked the pass was reached.

There Bradway was compelled to halt.

But after several vain attempts he succeeded in getting the reindeer and the sledge over the ice fall.

Then he continued on until at last he caught a glimpse of his comrades in the distance.

They discovered him presently. And he knew he was recognized, because they halted.

The mad boatswain soon came up with his friends, and it is needless to say that he was warmly welcomed.

"Were you taken prisoner?"

"How did you escape?"

"Were you wounded?"

Such were some of the questions which were eagerly put to Bradway.

In reply, he somewhat incoherently related his adventures, giving the party to infer he had stolen the sledge and made off in it.

Not a word did he say about the compact he had made with Casquar.

When Bradway's narrative was concluded the party pressed on once more.

The reindeer and sledge which the mad boatswain had brought with him were justly looked upon as a valuable acquisition.

Nothing of particular moment occurred during the continuance of the journey toward the treasure ship until the close of the following day.

Then an incident transpired which must be recorded, as it was one of vast importance, and the cause of great rejoicing. The party had left the mountains behind, and they were in an open country when a trail was discovered which crossed the direct course they were following.

Upon inspecting it, Bradway again recognized the footprints of Captain Barton.

Tom fairly shouted in delight.

"This is more than I dared to hope for. It must be father and his followers crossed the mountains in safety," he said, and, of course, all comprehended this was the true explanation.

"We must be within about a day's march of the treasure ship, if it still remains frozen in the sea where the Spanish buccaneers abandoned it. Now the question arises, shall we first push on to the ship, hoping to secure more supplies, and then follow Captain Barton, or take his trail now? We cannot supply his probable wants until we find some more supplies," said Captain Franklin.

There was some discussion, and Tom was at first anxious to follow his father without delay. But finally he yielded to the will of the majority, and the party continued on the course toward the supposed location of the treasure ship, which, with the skill of a veteran navigator, Captain Franklin calculated.

Another day was drawing to a close when the castaways reached the edge of a valley which sloped down to a frozen bay of the sea. Here bergs were heaped in broken masses. As all looked eagerly forward they discovered, through the labyrinths of icy outlines, two tall masts with two square yards on the foremast, the rigging perfect, so far as it went, for the figuration showed no more than half the height of the masts, the lower part being apparently hidden behind intervening ice.

"The treasure ship! Thank heaven, the handwriting in the iceberg was not a delusion!" shouted Captain Franklin.

Then all hands pressed forward along the edge of the valley, and the frozen ship came into better view.

The fabric appeared as if formed of frosted glass. The masts had a good rake, and with seamen's eyes the castaways took notice, the shrouds, stays, backstays, and braces were perfect. In fact, all beheld a schooner-rigged vessel lying in a sort of cradle of ice, stern on toward the sea.

With hearts beating fast with excitement, the party began the descent to the mysterious vessel upon which all their hope of life depended.

CHAPTER XV.

EXPLORING THE FROZEN SHIP.

As the castaways drew nearer, they saw the whole body of the vessel was frosted by the snow, into the glassy aspect of the spars and rigging, and the silent ship formed a remarkable picture.

At the first glance it was seen she was a very old craft.

The snow had molded itself upon her everywhere and somewhat enlarged her form.

The outlines still remained distinct, however.

In the structure of her bow which curved very low, the experienced seaman would find a knowledge of her age.

The headboards, running low to the top of the stern, formed a kind of well, the after part of which was framed by the bulkhead, after the fashion of ships building in the reign of Queen Anne.

Her topmasts were standing, but her jib-boom was rigged in.

There seemed to be no other evidence of her crew having prepared her for the winter quarters, in which she had been lying for years and years.

The outlines of six small cannon covered with snow could be traced.

There was a large gun aft.

And several petararoes, or swivel pieces, upon the after-bulwark rails.

Gaffs and booms were in their places, and the sails were furled upon them.

The figuration of the main hatch showed a small square.

A companion or hatch cover could be seen abaft of the mainmast.

There was no trace of a boat.

The vessel had a level deck from the well in the center to a fathom or so past the main shrouds.

Then came a short poop-deck, which went in at a great spring, or rise to the stern.

And the stern itself was very narrow and tall.

Had it not been for the fact that the handwriting in the log-book had prepared them for the discovery, the castaways would have been astonished into the belief that they were beholding a mere vision or phenomenon.

Indeed, the ice-clad and ice-bound schooner was a wonderful spectacle.

The finding of the vessel perfect in all respects after a lapse of a hundred years was indeed like a stroke of magic.

She inclined strongly to the larboard.

Owing to the corpulence of her bilge, she seemed tolerably upright, however.

The bed on which she rested inclined sharply to the frozen sea.

The elevation above the true sea line probably did not exceed twenty feet.

Very near the frozen vessel the castaways again halted.

And Captain Franklin turned to his companions and remarked thoughtfully:

"In years gone by, it is very evident the vessel must have got embayed in the ice when it was so far to the southward, and had in course of time been built up in it by floating masses."

"How old the ice about the poles may be, no one can tell, I suppose," said Tom Barton.

"No. Here the ice may possess the antiquity almost of the land."

"We must reach the deck by the larboard side." Come, let us no longer delay the exploration of the vessel. The suspense, the doubt as to whether she contains supplies which will enable us to prolong our lives must be settled. Anything is better than this awful uncertainty," continued Captain Franklin.

The party went on.

"She is so coated with snow we cannot even guess at the condition of her hulk," said Jack Deering.

"No. But later we will find out all about that," responded the captain.

They soon reached a point where the ice pressed close against the side of the vessel.

Esquimau Joe, and the man of his race, who now accompanied the party, were left with Elfrida and the sledges.

The others climbed into the forechains.

Captain Franklin was the first to reach the deck of the silent ship.

The two boys followed next.

Then came Martin Bradway and the others.

The wind began to blow.

And the clear harping, ringing sound it made through the frozen rigging sounded to the hearing of the excited explorers like the voices of unseen beings, who were crying out, in protest, against their intrusion.

Captain Franklin led the way aft.

The others followed in silence.

Pausing on the poop-deck, the captain pointed at the after hatch, which was covered with snow, and said:

"Here is the way into the body of the ship."

"Let's get the hatch-cover off at once," proposed Tom.

"Yes. We will remove the ice and snow directly," responded the captain.

With implements which they had brought from the sledge, the work of opening the frozen hatch was soon accomplished.

Then a flight of steps sinking into the darkness of the interior was discovered.

And a strange moldy smell floated up.

The foul air was allowed to escape for a time.

Then, having lighted an oil lantern, Captain Franklin began the descent of the stairs.

At the foot of the flight he reached a cabin door.

Then he paused and called out to his comrades on the deck.

The boys and the others, all filled with great curiosity, hurried down the stairs.

By the light of the captain's lantern it was then seen that the cabin was small.

In the center of it was a small, square table supported by iron pins.

A small lantern of an old pattern hung suspended by a chain over the table. Aft the hatchway was a door which Captain Franklin opened.

A narrow passage was revealed.

In this there were six small doors belonging to as many berths. But all were empty, as was discovered by opening the doors and flashing the light of the lantern through them.

Beyond the berths was found the storeroom.

Here were stores of all kinds in vast abundance, all perfectly preserved and frozen.

"Heaven be praised! We have found food enough to last us a year!" cried Captain Franklin.

It was a moment of thanksgiving.

Besides all kinds of foods, there were elegant silver table services, utensils for cooking, massive gold-lined tankards, and goblets of solid metal fit for the table of a king.

The captain assured his comrades that the petrification by freezing had undoubtedly kept the victuals sweet.

"There is little here that cannot be thawed out into relishable and nourishing food and drink by a good fire," he added.

Next a warm room filled with the richly embroidered clothing such as the Spanish buccaneers of a hundred years ago gloried in, was found.

Firearms of ancient make, swords, daggers and the like, were scattered about.

In a great chest in one corner of the wardroom was found a score of molded bags, filled with gold coins, no doubt the plunder from many a rich prize the buccaneers had taken before they were frozen in.

"There is a vast fortune in this chest alone, and it may be only a tithe of the wealth the vessel contains," said Captain Franklin.

"I for one wish there was no treasure on the vessel, for it will tempt the villain Casquar to the most desperate measures to gain it," said Jack Deering.

"Yes, but we must make up our minds to defend the ship to the last if we are attacked. The ice-clad cannon may serve us," replied the captain.

"That's so, if we can only find ammunition."

"We will find the magazine well supplied, I think. The buccaneers would not allow their vessel to run short of powder and ball," rejoined the captain.

They next explored the forward part of the ship.

A sliding door was found in the forward wall of the main cabin. It ran in grooves, and was easily pushed aside. Then the explorers found themselves in direct communication with the forward part of the vessel.

Beyond the sliding door was an armsroom, and a hundred

and fifty blunderbusses, muskets and fusils of antique design were counted. Also numerous cutlasses, hangers and boarding pikes.

Next the party entered the cookhouse or galley.

There were furnaces of brick and a great oven, and all sorts of cooking utensils at hand.

The fore-castle, beyond the galley, was large enough for the large crew the vessel must have carried.

The lower hold was found to contain several tons of coal, and at this discovery a rousing cheer went up from the band. Further explorations were postponed, and soon a rousing fire was blazing in the cookhouse, and all felt they had obtained a new lease of life.

CHAPTER XVI.

WELCOME DISCOVERIES—BRADWAY'S MIDNIGHT JOURNEY.

While food was brought to the cookhouse, and the other members of the party set to work cleaning up the place and preparing to thaw out the victuals, Tom and Jack left the schooner.

They joined Elfirida and the two Esquimaux and related to them what they had discovered in the schooner.

Elfirida cried out joyfully:

"Then we shall not perish, and if Casquar does not find us, we may survive the Arctic winter here."

"Yes," assented Jack.

Then he and Tom escorted Elfirida on board the frozen vessel.

A cabin was prepared for her, and in it was placed a small, portable stove, which was found among the supplies of the privateer.

Jack built a fire in this stove, and the girl waif was soon made comfortable.

By the time night closed down upon the scene the castaways had gotten the dogs and reindeer on board.

A shelter was erected on the deck for the animals by means of planks found in the hold.

At last all hands, save Bradway, who was left on the frozen deck to act as a sentinel, assembled in the cookhouse.

Ham had been thawed out and broiled.

Captain Franklin made, and this, with ship bread, made a meal which all pronounced most excellent.

After supper a little hatch was discovered against the bulkhead that separated the fore-castle from the cookroom.

This hatch was opened.

Below in the hold were found casks of rum and wine, all frozen solid, of course, also numerous other articles which need not be enumerated.

Under the main cabin was the powder magazine.

It was a bulkhead compartment.

In it were a dozen barrels of powder, also ammunition for the cannon and the firearms of small size.

The discovery of the abundant contents of the magazine was most welcome.

"Now, indeed, we know we can make a good fight if Casquar comes," said Captain Franklin.

"Yes," replied the mad boatswain, "and he will come."

Bradway spoke positively.

"Let us hope not, but at the same time be prepared for the worst," answered Captain Franklin.

"On the morrow we will get to work and clear away the ice so that we can make use of the cannon. I fancy if we can get them in order the Talasks will not find it an easy task to get near enough to board us," he added.

The two boys were very hopeful.

But Tom urged the captain to lose no time in allowing a further search to be made for his father.

"We will first prepare the frozen vessel for a siege. It is my duty to all who are with me to see that this is done," decidedly said the captain.

Tom recognized the justice and wisdom of this, so he offered no protest.

That night Bradway volunteered to stand guard. His offer was accepted.

When the hour of midnight had almost come the mad boatswain began preparations in a stealthy way for leaving the vessel.

It seemed the maniac really meant to keep the compact he had made with Casquar to abduct Elfirida.

All save the madman were below.

Alone on the deck, he had no fear of detection.

He led the reindeer off the deck over the ice, which arose almost to the level of the rail. The animal he had previously attached to the sledge.

Securing the reindeer behind an ice hill at a short distance from the frozen vessel, the mad boatswain returned to the deck.

His eyes flashed.

And he muttered to himself.

Noiselessly he descended the companionway.

For some little time he remained below.

At last, however, he reappeared and in his arms he bore an object muffled in a great fur robe, which looked like a girlish form.

Had he in some manner secured Elfirida so she could not give an alarm?

Was it the girl waif who had been rescued from Casquar whom the maniac of the Arctic seas bore in his arms?

One who had a knowledge of the compact Bradway had made with the mutineer who had made himself the king of the Talasks would have thought so.

Not a sound came from the object the mad boatswain carried.

Stealthily he traversed the deck.

Once he paused suddenly and seemed to listen.

Then he dropped his burden upon the main deck at the foot of the mainmast.

And he began to pace up and down.

He fancied he heard some one on the companion stairs.

Several moments elapsed.

No one appeared at the hatch.

Then Bradway crept to it and peered down and listened.

On account of the complete darkness, of course he could see nothing.

And not a sound reached him.

"Bah! I deceived myself, or was it the noise of some falling object, which some one may have displaced in his sleep," he muttered.

Then he returned to the mainmast.

The muffled object he had so hastily deposited there still remained motionless.

He raised it in his arms.

Again he resumed the stealthy transit of the deck.

He reached a point where the rail was broken, and which had afforded a place for the reindeer to pass out upon the ice.

Then he leaped from the deck.

Bounding swiftly over the ice, he disappeared in a moment behind the elevation, where he had left the reindeer.

Upon reaching the sledge he placed his burden in it.

Then he untied the thong with which he had secured the reindeer and entered the sledge.

"Now to take the back trail! Now to meet Casquar," said the madman.

He urged the reindeer swiftly away over the route which he and his comrades had traversed to reach the frozen ship of the old Spanish buccaneers.

And he went on and on for a distance of more than a mile. All the time he kept a vigilant outlook ahead.

Casquar said he would be near on the back trail of the party at midnight. Ha! I trust the villain will not fail me!" muttered the madman anon.

It really seemed from his words that he desired to carry out the dishonorable compact he had made.

And yet even insanity could scarcely have made such a man as Bradway anxious of serving the man he hated with a mortal hate—the man he had sworn since he became insane to kill.

Suddenly an exclamation escaped the mad boatswain.

He discovered a dark object ahead.

It was outlined against the snow and ice.

He uttered a moment later:

"Ha, it is he! Casquar is there, and he is alone! Ha, ha, ha! It is as I wish. Now to reach the infernal wretch!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CUNNING OF THE MAD BOATSWAIN—A CAPTURE.

Martin Bradway was quite right.

He had, indeed, discovered the mutineer chief of the Arctic savages.

And the arch villain stood alone, rifle in hand, at the head of a large reindeer, which was attached to a sledge.

Quickly the mad boatswain placed the muffled object, which looked like a girlish form, on the sledge seat beside him.

Then he urged his reindeer on.

As he approached near Casquar, he cried:

"See, see! I have kept my promise. Here is the girl, securely bound and gagged. I carried her away from my friends without being discovered."

"Good! I will take the girl in my sledge and be off with her to join my band at once," said Casquar, eagerly.

The mad boatswain halted his animal quite near the sledge of Casquar.

The night rendered objects but indistinctly visible.

And the mutineer, seeing the form at the side of Bradway, added, exultantly:

"Now, my beauty! I'll lose no time in making you my wife; you will not again escape me."

With that he leaped from his sledge and came forward to take the girl.

In a moment he was close beside the madman, and he stooped with outstretched arms to lift the form at Bradway's side from the vehicle.

At the same moment, with a lightning-like movement, Bradway drew a hatchet from beneath the fur robe over his limbs, and dealt the mutineer a blow on the head.

Uttering a groan, he pitched forward into the snow, beside the madman's sledge.

The succeeding instant the latter was upon him.

But Casquar was motionless.

The terrible blow he had received on the skull had rendered him insensible.

"Ha! ha! I have outwitted the inhuman wretch at the price of a lie. But what is that, when innocent lives are at stake? Ha! ha! Fool that he was to believe that Martin Bradway would betray another to save himself!"

He had heavy cords or thongs of reindeer hide in his hands.

With these he bound Casquar hand and foot.

Then he lifted him and hurled him into the bottom of the sledge in which he had come from the frozen schooner.

Then he tore aside the fur robe in which the object which resembled a girlish form was muffled.

And a bundle of clothing so arranged as to resemble a human form was disclosed.

The madman had resorted to a ruse worthy of the cunning of a liar, and often remarkable.

And he had completely duped the mutineer chief.

"Now I'll away! Ha, ha! it is my turn now. Ho, ho! I shall see Casquar pay the penalty of his crimes yet. Yes, yes. Martin will make good his oath. The mutineer shall die!"

So the maniac cried aloud.

Then he entered his sledge.

While Casquar remained as silent and motionless as if dead, Bradway urged his reindeer along over the route he had but just traversed.

Meantime, Captain Franklin had awakened.

A high wind was blowing. He heard the fall of broken ice from the spars on the deck.

Arising from his bunk in the main cabin, he lighted his oil lantern and ascended to the deck.

There he glanced about and failed to discover anything of Martin Bradway of course; for, at that moment the mad boatswain was approaching the frozen vessel on his return from the meeting with Casquar.

The absence of Bradway naturally enough surprised the captain.

And he was somewhat alarmed.

"Martin, Martin!" he shouted.

There was no answer.

Hearing the captain's voice, Tom and Jack came on deck. And they were quickly informed that the mad boatswain was missing.

While the lads and the captain were vaguely speculating as to the meaning of the absence of Bradway, Jack suddenly uttered a low warning.

"Some one comes. See! Yonder—to the south?" replied Jack.

As he spoke, he pointed.

The captain and Tom looked in the direction which the boy indicated.

In a moment they made out the outlines of a reindeer and

sledge, with one occupant, through the semi-gloom of the Arctic night.

The sledge came on. Presently Bradway was recognized in it. He was saluted, with a shout. To this he responded.

And a few moments later he drove his reindeer up the ice wall, that reached almost to the level with the deck, where the rail was broken.

Tom took the reindeer by the headstall and led him on the deck.

"Where have you been, Martin? Why did you desert your post?" demanded Captain Franklin, somewhat sternly.

"Ho, ho! I went to meet Casquar. See! I have made him a prisoner! The mutineer chief of the Arctic savages is in my power!" cried the madman, exultantly.

He pointed at the form of the man in the bottom of the sledge.

In a wild and incoherent way the mad boatswain told the story of the capture, and how it chanced the opportunity had come to him to outwit the buccaneer as he had done.

"This is a rare stroke of good fortune, since now there can be no doubt the savages will soon discover the frozen schooner," said Captain Franklin.

"What do you mean, I do not quite comprehend," said Tom.

"I mean that we shall hold the white chief of the Talasks as a hostage for our own safety."

"That was my idea. But in the end Martin will keep his oath. The mutineer shall die!" said the mad boatswain.

Casquar had regained his senses before the frozen ship was reached. But he made no plea for mercy or release. Sullen and frowning, he glared at his captors.

He was taken below and placed in irons.

The dawn of a new day came.

And all hands set to work to prepare the ship to meet the expected assault of the enemy.

A lookout was stationed at the crosstrees of the mainmast. Toward noon he uttered a thrilling shout, and added:

"The Talasks are coming!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ATTACK ON THE FROZEN SCHOONER.

The announcement of the lookout that the Talasks were coming sent a thrill through the hearts of the occupants of the frozen schooner.

The snow and ice had been carefully removed from the cannon, and they had been found in an excellent state of preservation.

All the pieces had been loaded, and a rude, but none the less substantial breastworks had been erected along the rail on both sides of the decks.

The muskets had been brought up from the arms room, and such of the party as were not supplied with firearms of their own were then armed.

Elfrida, the girl waif of the wrecked whaler, appeared on the deck, as the preparations for the defense of the vessel relating to the posting of the crew was going on.

She was informed of the approach of the enemy.

And then Captain Franklin said:

"You had better not show yourself on deck, miss, while the Talasks are near; a stray arrow might reach you, and I could never forgive myself if I allowed you needlessly to expose yourself."

"For my sake do not insist upon remaining upon the deck, Elfrida, dear Elfrida," said Jack.

The beautiful waif blushed charmingly. Her eyes met the eloquent glance of the brave lad. She knew then she was beloved.

The knowledge caused a joyful expression to appear upon her charming countenance, and she replied in a half whisper:

"I cannot resist your appeal. Since it is your wish I will go below."

Jack pressed her hand, and then Elfrida left the deck.

The Talasks continued the advance.

For long they were in sight of the frozen vessel.

Then they halted and gesticulated and pointed.

That they had discovered the ship could not be doubted.

The savages were presently seen to alight from their sledges.

Then, while a sufficient party were left with the women of the band and the sledges, the others prepared for the attack.

They divided into two nearly equal forces.

And then it was seen as they deployed to come at the schooners from both sides that they meant to divide the attention of the defenders of the vessel.

But cannon on each side of the schooner were manned. Fuses in hand, the gunners of an hour stood ready.

Then followed a thrilling interval. The wild men came on, cautiously at first, then suddenly a chorus of terrible yells pealed from their throats, and they dashed recklessly forward on both sides of the ship at full speed.

"Fire!" shouted the captain.

The next moment the blended roar of the cannon awoke the echoes of that frozen land, and caused the vessel to quiver to her foundation.

The cannon had been well depressed.

And they were loaded with grape and cannister.

The deadly discharge wrought great havoc with the ranks of the enemy.

The Talasks wavered, then halted, and while yet the detonation of the cannonade reverberated in the air they turned and fled.

The snow was strewn with the dead and wounded.

Before they could reload the cannon the Talasks rallied.

Their leader formed the broken ranks.

And once more the wild brigade, in two sections, charged as before.

It was a moment of despair for the castaways.

The small arms, they felt, could not be relied upon to repulse such desperate and determined enemies.

But each man grasped his rifle or musket and seemed determined to battle to the last.

Martin Bradway, the mad boatswain, had disappeared from the deck, as the volley from the cannon was discharged.

Suddenly he reappeared, driving Casquar, the mutineer, before him at the muzzle of a revolver.

He halted his prisoner on the deck, where an elevated platform was erected for one of the cannon.

Then, in full sight of the Talasks, the mad boatswain went through an expressive pantomime.

It was intended to inform the enemy that Casquar would be immediately slain if they continued to advance.

At first the savage men of the north pole hesitated.

Casquar was in mortal terror.

All at once he began addressing the savages in their own strange language, which we have seen he had long since mastered.

Shouting at the top of his voice, the mutineer made himself heard and understood by his followers.

It seemed he had ordered them to retreat.

They halted and then reluctantly fell back out of range, carrying their wounded with them.

Casquar's bronzed face paled, and he said:

"I will do my best to prevent another attack, on one condition, and that is that you set me free when the Talasks are far away. I will then keep them from troubling you further."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SURVIVORS OF THE LOST SHIP FORWARD.

Martin Bradway made no reply to the proposition of the mutineer.

On the contrary, he turned to Captain Franklin and asked: "What say you, captain?"

"I will agree to set Casquar free in ten days if he will order his savages to withdraw and proceed to their own country. He can assure them thus only can he save his life. He can tell them he will rejoin them."

"Good!" cried Casquar, in tones of relief. "You have the upper hand. I am in your power. I must accept your terms," he added.

"Very well. Yonder come two Talasks with a white sail cloth at the end of a lance. That is a peace signal, I take it."

"Yes. The bearers are Talask chiefs."

"All right. Let them come on. Halt them when they are within speaking distance."

"Yes."

The Talask chiefs continued to come on.

Presently Casquar shouted to them.

The Talasks then halted, and the mutineer went on talking to them.

He addressed his savage followers at some length.

Then they replied, and immediately returned to the main band.

"I have told them the terms you have offered me, and I have directed them to journey back to their own country. The chiefs have promised to do so," said Casquar.

The castaways suspected some treachery on the part of the mutineer.

They watched the Talasks closely.

Very soon they saw what seemed to be the evidence that the mutineer had really done as he had agreed.

The entire force of the Talasks moved north, and in a short time they were all out of sight.

Then Casquar was marched back to his prison place in the hold.

There, when he was left alone, he muttered to himself exultantly:

"Curse them all! I'll outwit them yet! I merely told the Talasks to proceed north for a few miles, and there remain until I join them. If I am set free at the end of the ten days, or escape in the meantime, I will at once return with the savages. I'll capture the treasure ship yet, and then for vengeance on all the castaways! As for Martin Bradway, I'll make him suffer all the torture the savage northmen can invent."

Meantime the castaways rejoiced and congratulated themselves.

But leaving them for a time, let us follow the trail of Tom Barton's father and his three comrades over the mountain of ice, where, it will be recalled to mind, Casquar had sent a detachment of the savages to trail them.

Captain Barton and his comrades had long since been compelled to leave the location at 83 degrees north latitude, which they had occupied when Martin Bradway left them.

As already stated, they had been hunted like wild beasts by Casquar, and it was only through rare good fortune, which seemed indeed to be providential, that they had eluded their enemies.

Having crossed the mountains the survivors of the Forward found themselves in a desperate situation.

Each man experienced despair then, for their supplies were almost exhausted.

When they left the ice palace, which Captain Franklin's party had subsequently discovered, they had only intended to explore the country for a short distance.

And, therefore, they had taken but little food with them.

But they had lost their way.

And they were wandering aimlessly when they crossed the range. They hoped to reach the northern end of Siberia and find some friendly tribe.

Upon getting clear of the ice hills or mountains the country before them presented difficulties in the way of their advance which they could not hope to surmount.

There were deep fissures in the earth and ice, and wide chasms which seemed to have been made by some volcanic upheaval of other days.

So the course of the lost men was changed.

They shaped their way along the impassable country north, and gradually diverged in an easterly, or rather northerly course.

Meanwhile a local storm of snow fell at the foot of the ice mountains to the depth of several feet, though it did not extend as far north as the frozen ship.

The band of Talasks whom Casquar had dispatched in pursuit of Captain Barton's force proceeded over the mountains on the trail.

But they were not fairly over the range when they were caught in the heavy snowstorms alluded to.

This storm was the salvation of Captain Barton's party.

The deep snowfall completely obliterated their trail.

The Talasks sought shelter under the ice ledges while the storm lasted.

Then they sought to find the trail once more.

The task proved entirely beyond even those keen savages' skill.

And finally they abandoned it and reluctantly retraced their way.

They had not rejoined Casquar when he set out after Captain Franklin.

The survivors of the lost ship Forward had no knowledge of the frozen schooner.

And yet by a singular chance they were journeying toward it.

When the Talasks, who had crossed the mountain, returned, they took Casquar's trail.

On the night following the day of the repulse of the attack of the Talasks upon the frozen vessel, their savage band passed the treasure ship on the trail of Casquar without discovering the vessel.

On the day following the one which witnessed the repulse of the Talasks, Captain Barton and his three followers ate the last morsel of food which they had with them.

"The end has come. We have made a gallant fight for our lives, but fate is against us. It seems it is the will of heaven that we should perish. It is hard to die alone here so far from home and friends, but let us meet the worst like true men. After all, it is better that our misery should end. There is no escape," said Captain Barton.

He and his companions had halted at the foot of a great pyramid of ice and snow.

One of the party, who had never yet uttered a word of despair—one who was physically the strongest and most competent to endure privation, replied:

"Yes, the end has come, it seems, but before I give up I'm bound to see what can be discovered from the top of this lofty mountain. Give me your marine glass, captain, and let me climb the heights and make one last observation for the village of some friendly natives whom we have so vainly sought."

"All right, Ames! Heaven grant us aid at the supreme moment of our fate," responded the captain.

Then he unslung the telescope he carried and handed it to Ames.

The latter began to climb the lofty ice mound.

Up, up, he toiled.

His comrades watched him without hope.

At last he reached the summit.

Then he paused and put the glass to his eyes.

Long and anxiously he scanned the frozen landscape.

But at last a cry so wild, so thrilling, came from his lips that his comrades thought he had gone mad.

Then he added:

"I see the masts of a ship frozen in the ice, to the north."

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

"He is mad! It is an optical delusion!"

"It cannot be!"

These and other comments greeted the announcement of the man who had climbed the snow-clad heights.

His comrades could not believe he had really discovered a frozen ship, much as they desired to do so.

But the lookout quickly descended.

Then he convinced his companions that he had really made the wonderful discovery of the frozen vessel.

They were wild with joy.

And they immediately set out to make their way around the icy pyramid.

As soon as they were beyond it all saw the wonderful sight which the frozen pirate vessel presented, as we have already described.

They went forward swiftly.

And all at once they halted as if shot.

They had discovered human forms—the figures of men—moving about on the deck of the ice-locked vessel.

"The frozen vessel has a crew. I can see they are not Talasks. Let us go on," said Captain Barton.

The advance was continued.

Meantime Tom Barton was just at this time acting as lookout on the crosstrees of the mainmast, where a "crow's nest" had been set up.

The lad presently caught sight of the approaching men.

Clad as they were in the Arctic costume worn by all explorers of the frozen ice regions of the north, the lad saw they were not savages.

He set up a shout.

The attention of all hands on board the frozen vessel was drawn to the approaching men.

The rapidly drew nearer.

When they were close enough to enable the crew of the ice-locked vessel to see faces, Tom recognized his father.

The boy had already descended from the crow's nest.

"It is my father! Found at last!" he shouted.

Then he leaped over the rail and ran to meet his father.

The latter clasped his son to his heart, and strong man as he was, for a moment his tears fell fast.

A little later Captain Barton and his comrades were on board the schooner.

There all their wants were speedily supplied, and a joyful reunion took place.

Then followed mutual explanations.

Of all present, save Tom, Martin Bradway, the mad boatswain, was seemingly most rejoiced.

His affection for his old captain was the strongest sentiment of his life.

Meantime, down in the hold of the frozen vessel the mutineer was seeking to escape.

He had managed to free himself from his chains, and that night at a late hour he forced the door of the compartment in which he was confined.

Then he stole on deck.

One man, half asleep, stood watch.

He was in the shadows.

The mutineer crept by him and climbed over the rail. The next moment he was stealing away to rejoin his men.

But suddenly the loud report of a rifle rang out upon the silence of the night.

Casquar uttered a terrible cry, and fell at full length in the snow.

The man who had shot him sprang up from behind an empty cask on the deck of the schooner.

He was Martin Bradway.

The report of his rifle brought all hands on deck.

Bradway explained why he had discharged his weapon.

Then he bounded over the rail and ran to where Casquar had fallen.

He examined the body of the mutineer.

"The wretch is dead, and Martin Bradway has kept his oath!" he shouted in a moment.

The following day the castaways held a long consultation.

It was determined to try to spend the winter in the frozen ship. The hull was found intact, and it was hoped that in the summer, when the ice in the adjacent sea broke up, the vessel might be got afloat.

We need not dwell on the long months which followed, save to say the party remained on the vessel until summer. Once the Talasks appeared, but they were again repulsed, and they did not come back again.

When the ice broke up in the sea, by blasting the frozen foundation of the schooner she was floated out on a great cake of ice.

When the open sea was reached the ice cake was further demolished by explosives, until the pirate craft was free.

Then she was navigated southward.

Some days later she sprang a leak.

And all hands were compelled to take to a raft.

No time was given the castaways to secure anything save some water and provisions, and the treasure the ship contained.

The pirate craft went down while the raft was in sight of her. The next day a vessel was sighted. It proved to belong to Jack Deering's father. The occupants of the raft were picked up, and then they learned that Jack's father had sent the vessel to which they owed their rescue in search of the North Star.

The voyage homeward was safely made.

And great was the rejoicing of Jack's father, when he had his beloved son back again.

He had long ago forgiven him for running away.

Elfrida was restored to her relatives, and we may add here that the acquaintance which began between her and Jack amid the perils of the Arctic seas was continued.

A few years later the beautiful girl waif became Jack's happy bride.

As for the North Star, which the mutineers had captured, it was never heard of more, so undoubtedly it was lost in the Arctic seas, with all on board.

Tom Barton soon after his return from the north sailed with his father on another voyage.

He eventually became the captain of his own vessel.

Martin Bradway entirely recovered his reason, and for years he served as boatswain with Captain Barton.

Next week's issue will contain "JOE, THE ACTOR'S BOY; OR, FAMOUS AT FOURTEEN."

INTERESTING ARTICLES

FORTUNE FOR DOGS.

Under the will of Miss Louie B. Iams, of Trotwood, six miles west of Dayton, O., that was probated here to-day, Attorney Daniel Wallman, of this city, who is named executor, is directed to hold in trust the entire estate, valued at \$10,000, for the benefit of four dogs, pets of Miss Iams.

At the death of the last of the dogs it is directed that the property be sold and the proceeds divided equally between the St. Elizabeth and Miami Valley Hospitals of this city.

The will provides also that a caretaker for the dogs be provided, who may be discharged for any neglect of duty that might cause the pets discomfort or suffering.

BABY'S LARGE FEET.

There is no doubt that little Virginia Scroggins of Rockwall, Tex., has the largest feet of any baby in the world. Virginia is two years old and is just beginning to walk about the house. Her parents and the physician declare that the delay in her walking is due to the fact that she can hardly drag her feet about. Instead of wearing a tiny pink baby shoe, Virginia wears what would be a No. 10 of men's sizes if such "baby" shoes could be bought in the stores. Her feet are fully ten inches in length and are four inches across the instep.

Mrs. Scroggins declares when Virginia was born her feet were almost as long as her body. Since that time they have grown in proportion to the other members of the body and it is figured that by the time she reaches the marriageable age her feet will be twenty-four inches long.

GETS \$112 A WEEK.

Consider the poor, downtrodden calf skinner—likewise the equally poor and equally downtrodden boner of chuck. The calf skinner, diligently plying his trade at the Chicago stockyards, and the boner of chuck—by diligently wielding a wicked cleaver at the same place—can earn but a mere trifle of—but here are the official figures:

Carl Meyer, attorney for the packers at the recent wage hearing before Judge Alschuler, produced pay vouchers show the calf skinner received for 56 hours' work \$112, while the chuck boner received \$74 for a 62-hour week.

Of interest to the general public was the prediction of Meyer that if demobilization continues large quantities of food released by the Government for civilian consumption will bring the present peak prices for food tumbling down to within the reach of the man less fortunate than the poor, downtrodden calf skinner and the boner of chuck.

NIGHT IN A WELL.

Plunging into a well twenty feet in depth, and remaining there for many hours, was the experience of John Switzer while hunting foxes near Powell, six miles south of Wheaton, Mo.

Switzer and several others of Granby came over for an all-night fox chase. Switzer selected an abandoned field near an old hut to wait for the chase. About midnight he heard the dogs coming his way, and as he started to meet them he stepped into the old well.

Fortunately the well was dry, but Switzer was badly bruised and dazed. He spent the night in a vain attempt to climb the sides of his prison.

As morning dawned, Switzer determined to make his last effort to free himself. Catching with both hands on the sides of the well, he climbed a few inches at a time. He worked cautiously, as his strength rapidly became weaker. Finally Switzer reached the top, and by grabbing a small bush he pulled himself from the hole of torture. He was found in a dazed condition by his companions.

BANANA FLOUR.

From the island of Jamaica comes the announcement that recent scientific work has produced a valuable substitute for wheat flour in the dried flour of bananas.

Bananas are the most important product of the West Indies and the war disturbance in Europe has made the prices very unsatisfactory. The result has been that a scientific effort has been concentrated upon the production of a fruit flour, which costs less than wheat flour and has a nutritive value equal, if not superior, to any cereal flour.

Five hundred and thirty-seven pounds of bananas produce one hundred and thirty-eight pounds of flour at a cost of 96 cents per hundred pounds of finished product. The wholesale price quoted for the material is 4 cents a pound. This gives a value of \$5.60 for nine hundred and fifteen pounds of banana fruit on the stem. The banana meal is mixed with wheat flour and is made into all sorts of bread and cake and seems to be especially valuable in the production of ginger bread and ginger cakes. Cakes such as scones can be made from the banana meal straight in place of wheat flour. The high sugar content makes the banana flour much more palatable and certainly more nutritious than the plain starch flour produced by the German Government from potatoes and used as a war bread.

The American consul from Kingston, Jamaica, announces that we may soon expect the making and sale of banana flour as a regular enterprise in the flour and banana world.

GOOD READING

DOGS COST \$5,000,000.

Mitchell Wilkins, Federal sheep investigator, says that dogs cost South Dakota more than \$5,000,000 a year, and his statement is being made the basis for legislation to prevent killing of small stock by dogs.

Wilkins claims that there are 150,000 dogs in the State, or one for every four residents. The average dog, he says, consumes \$34 worth of food annually.

Charles S. Weller, president of the South Dakota Wool Growers' Association, favors any action which will stimulate sheep raising in the State. The legislature is expected to take up measures intended to adequately protect sheep raisers from dogs.

STILL IN ATTIC.

Long sought by the police, a fully equipped whiskey still was uncovered on the top floor of a house in Castle street, Plymouth, Mass., recently, the home of Constantine Tavas. A huge quantity of material for the manufacture of liquor was seized. A rear room was fitted up as the distillery. There was a 30-gallon copper tank, with coils and "drips" and including two 50-gallon containers filled with a mixture of molasses, raisins, lemons, water and other ingredients. The police found also five gallons of liquor, apparently freshly made. This is the first still ever discovered in this part of the State. Tavas, who was in the house, admitted he owned the property.

PRAISE ALLIGATOR FLESH.

Hunters of alligators frequently throw hundreds of pounds of alligator meat to the carrion crows and buzzards after they have removed the hides, but if the demand can be created for this meat the flesh can be had at low cost.

Recently in Atlanta, Ga., an alligator meat banquet was served, and those who participated said that the meat was agreeable. Some said that the flesh had the suggestion of lobster about it, others remarked it was somewhat like pork, while still others said there was something akin to fish about it. The alligator meat was parboiled, then fried in eggs and cracker crumbs, very much after the manner of a breaded veal cutlet.

MULE BALKED.

Hampton Rhodes, a negro—not a ship channel—is in jail at Atlanta, Ga., and the nearest he can get to corn whiskey now is corn bread. Rhodes had been dividing his time up in the mountains between riding a mule to different places of worship where he exhorted dusky sinners to repent and making a little corn whiskey for his stomach's sake. Riding near a "still" in Dawson County, which had just been

raided, "Hamp" saw two revenue officers peering through the brushes. Two big brown jugs slung across the back of the mule had aroused the suspicions of the revenueurs. When the officers stepped out the mule bolted, with the officers in pursuit. There ensued a pretty race. But just as Hamp believed victory was in sight the mule, true to the old Georgia tradition, "balked." The officers caught up with Hamp, and—Hamp is in jail, the liquor is held as evidence, and the mule is enjoying a vacation. Hamp has forgiven the officers, but will never forgive the mule.

ABOUT DANIEL BOONE.

Daniel Boone, whose birth anniversary is in February, is one of those heroes whose fame increases with the passing years. With the spread of civilization and culture throughout North America the hard-where he helped to lay the foundations for a pioneer loom ever larger and more praiseworthy. The last of many honors conferred upon Daniel Boone was his election in October, 1915, to a place among the immortals in the American Hall of Fame in New York.

Boone was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on February 11, 1735. His youth was spent in North Carolina, but his great fame was gained in Kentucky, where he helped to lay the foundations for a pioneer civilization which produced, among other great men, Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Both North Carolina and Kentucky have erected memorials to Boone. One of the most interesting of these shrines is at Holman's Ford, near Salisbury, N. C., marking the exact site of the Boone homestead, where young Daniel spent nineteen years of his boyhood and young manhood.

A log cabin which is said to be an exact duplicate of the one in which the Boone family lived has been erected on the spot, and in front of it stands a granite shaft, forming an Indian arrow head fifteen feet in height and mounted upon a massive base.

On the banks of the Yadkin River, not far away, is Boone's Cave, where Daniel and other members of the family retreated when closely pressed by the savages. In Davie County, which adjoins the county containing the Boone memorial, the remains of Daniel's father and mother are buried. The old Joppa cemetery, near the village of Mocksville, is the last resting place of the parents of the hero. In order to save the old stone which marks the grave from the depredations of relic-hunters it has been found necessary to enclose it in a steel cage. The stone bears this quaint inscription:

"Squire Boone departed this life in thay sixty-ninth year of his life in thay year of our Lord 1765, Geneary tha 2."

FROM ALL POINTS

SKUNK OIL PROVED USELESS.

There is an idea abroad that skunk oil is good for rheumatism, neuralgia, colds and other ailments. This superstition probably arose from the fact that the Indians and early settlers thought that the oil of any animal giving off such a disagreeable odor as the skunk must be good for something.

Skunk oil probably is in the same class as rattlesnake oil, which was thought to be useful because the bite of this snake is so poisonous. Indian medicine men appear to have made use of skunk as well as rattlesnake oil along with their incantations. The best trained physicians, however, attribute no medicinal value whatsoever to these oils. No legitimate use can be made of skunk oil unless for oiling harness or shoes or for making soap. Nevertheless there is a small demand for it as medicine.

TOBACCO CAN MAKING

In the manufacture of containers for tobacco women have proved so expert that they are to be employed exclusively on this work in one of the largest tin can factories in the middle West.

According to a report received from one of the agents of the investigation and inspection service, Department of Labor, a Chicago plant which has been noted for its enterprise opened on January 1 a new department, equipped with the most modern machinery and especially arranged for the convenience of the women workers.

The manager of this plant, having tried women on the various processes, found them peculiarly fitted for the work involved in the manufacture of tobacco cans and so provided a special department where a large number could be employed.

In other departments of the same plant the manager said that the experiment of using women for night work during the rush of war orders had been found of no advantage whatever. He declared that as a rule women did not do good work at night, possibly because they came to the factory weary from attending to domestic duties during the day.

PILL MAKING CRABS.

These tiny creatures, most of which are about the size of a pea, are in abundance on the shores of the Malay peninsula. They are usually first noticed on the beaches after the going out of the tide, when they make the beach look covered with loose, powdery sand and holes of various sizes. Upon looking more closely it is seen that little paths converge in the sand to each hole and that the sand itself is in minute balls.

At the approach of an observer there immediately becomes apparent a peculiar twinkle—the simultaneous and rapid retreat of a myriad of the tiny crabs into their holes.

Should the watcher take up his position by one of the holes and remain perfectly motionless they will in time come out when he can see them at work.

Coming cautiously to the mouth of the hole the crab will reconnoitre. Satisfied that no enemy is near, it will venture about its own length from its lurking place. Then, rapidly taking up particles of sand in its claws, it deposits them in a groove beneath its thorax.

As it does so a little ball of sand is rapidly projected through its mouth. This one put aside, the process being repeated until the smooth beach is covered with little pellets or pills. This is evidently the crab's method of extracting particles of food from the sand.

NEW THINGS.

For trapping burglars an Englishman has invented a mechanism that at set hours drops a person who steps in front of a safe into a pit and closes doors over them.

* * *

Perforated metal tubes, finished to resemble tree trunks, into which branches can be thrust, have been patented for building artificial trees for decorations.

* * *

The greatest hydroelectric plant in the world, planned for India, is expected to deliver water to the turbines at a pressure of 680 pounds to the square inch.

* * *

Long, slender sand bags have been designed to replace Indian clubs and dumbbells in gymnasiums, their weight being adjustable, besides which they are noiseless.

* * *

Ever since the founding of the Pasteur Institute in Paris there has been a steady decline in the number of hydrophobia cases, none at all occurring in some years.

* * *

A new electric washing machine is featured by an elliptical tub that revolves and tosses the water and clothing about, corrugations and rubbing surfaces being omitted.

* * *

Experts have estimated that more than 8,700,000 homes in the United States are lighted by electricity and some 15,000,000 by other means.

* * *

The production of wine in Greece last year is estimated in the neighborhood of 10,566,800 gallons, or about double that of the preceding year.

* * *

An iron ship weighs 27 per cent less than a wooden one of the same dimensions and will carry 15 per cent more cargo when loaded to the same depth.

LUCKY JOE BROWN

OR

THE SMARTEST BOY IN NEW YORK

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A serial story)

CHAPTER VII (Continued).

The girl told him to stop in front of it, and when Joe did so she sprang out and touched an electric bell.

The door was immediately opened by a man.

"Take charge of the auto, Henry," said the girl.

Joe, feeling that his work was over, got out and, raising his hat, was about to walk away.

"Oh, wait a minute," cried the girl. "Walk around to the house with me, please."

"Certainly, miss," replied Joe.

He felt nervous and awkward. He scarcely knew what to do or say.

When they reached the foot of the broad steps the girl produced a pocketbook.

"Now, I must pay you for your trouble," she said, "and I want to thank you most warmly for what you have done for me."

Joe drew himself up proudly.

"You can't pay me anything, miss," he replied. "I am only too glad to have been of service to you. Good-day."

"Oh, wait! Wait!" she cried. "Don't go away so. I—I am sure I beg your pardon for offering you money. May I ask your name? My father will want to thank you, I am sure."

"My name is Joseph Brown, miss. But I want no more thanks."

"And your address? Have you a card?"

"I have no card. At present I am staying at the Astor House."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Brown. I am Miss Blakelee. My father is Edward Blakelee—you may have heard of him."

"No, Miss Blakelee. I am an entire stranger in New York. I only arrived here yesterday. In fact, miss, I am just a plain country boy, and it is entirely unnecessary for your father to trouble himself on my account."

Again Joe raised his hat, and this time the girl let him go.

Down the avenue went our boy from Little Indian, wondering what was the matter with him.

The matter was that Joe had fallen in love at first sight, and that with a girl whom in all human probability he would never see again.

A hundred times before he turned in at the Astor House that night Joe called himself a fool for his thoughts, but in spite of that he could not get Miss Blakelee out of his head.

But if this was fool business Joe did one sensible thing before the end of that day.

He inquired of the hotel clerk for a good savings bank and, having obtained the address, went there and deposited his money, all but such as he thought he might need.

The rest of the day was spent wandering about seeing things, and Joe saw so much that when at last he did turn in he slept the sleep of the just.

Next morning after breakfast, which was not taken at the Astor House, for Joe had tried supper there and found it entirely too expensive a place, our boy from Little Indian started to see what he could do about his old coins.

He studied the business directory and found the addresses of four dealers in such goods.

The first man was on Nassau street, but Joe found him so surly that he pulled right out without even attempting to tell his business.

Then he went to another near Union Square.

This man had a small room on the second floor, which was so jammed full of curiosities of all sorts that there was scarcely a chance to move about.

Joe produced one gold, one silver and one copper coin and inquired what they were worth.

The coin dealer studied them with close attention.

"Where did you get these coins, young man?" he suddenly asked.

"You think they were stolen?" said Joe.

"I don't think—I know it," was the sharp reply. "There are no duplicates of this gold coin in America. I sold it to the owner. If you are wise and want to avoid trouble you will tell me how these pieces came into your possession."

"Who is the owner?" demanded Joe. "That is just what I want to find out."

CHAPTER VIII.

JOE PARTS WITH HIS COINS FOR A VERY SMALL REWARD.

Now, fortunately for Joe Brown—luckily, we should say, for luck seemed still coming his way—he had to deal with a man of discernment and common sense.

At first the coin dealer, who instantly recognized the coins as part of a collection stolen from his customer, of which robbery the police had never been notified, thought that he was dealing with a crook.

But one good look at Joe's honest face caused him to change his opinion.

But for that Joe would surely have fallen into the hands of the police, for the robbery had been kept quiet for the express reason that it was hoped that an effort would be made to sell the coins.

"Young man," said the dealer in reply to Joe's question, "I am not telling the name yet. You tell me how you came by these coins and if I am satisfied with your story I will see that you get to the owner all right."

(To be continued.)

AFTER BLACK DIAMONDS

—OR—

THE BOYS OF COAL SHAFT NO. 3

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER V (Continued).

By this time a very large crowd had gathered, many of them miners, but also a large number of others.

"That's the way, Newton! Go at him! Finish him up, too!" called out one in the crowd, and immediately a chorus of yells, all encouraging to the young fellow, was sent up.

The ruffian changed his mind about fighting.

"Say, kid, youse better not fool around me, fer I'll sure beat de head off'n youse, and yer mudder'd never know yuh!"

"I'm much obliged to you!" answered Robert, taking his pail in hand and starting through the circle. "Any time you want a little of this you just let me know and I'll be glad to accommodate you. Only you'd better come loaded for bear, for I'm certainly going to clean you up!"

Out of the crowd Jim spoke to his young chum:

"Bob, you oughtn't to have made that last remark."

"You're wrong, Jim. That was just the way to talk to that fellow. You know, when you meet a ruffian like that you want to hang your bluff up high and strong. Then he's not very apt to come butting around on a hunt for a fight. I don't want to fight the fellow. That's the reason I said what I did to him."

The crowd behind was dispersing and scattering, now that the excitement was over, and the boys went on toward the business section of the town.

"Why are you coming through this way instead of going straight across the tracks?" asked Jim.

"Soap, Jim, scap! What would a fellow do without soap?"

Just as they swung about the corner leading to the main street of the town Robert spied a pretty girl driving a handsome horse, the vehicle a phaeton.

"By George, Jim! Did you see that young lady? She's a stranger here, and she surely is pretty. She's the prettiest I've ever seen in Rocksbury!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRETTY STRANGER AND THE RUNAWAY.

"She was a stranger to me, too," answered Jim, looking after the phaeton, which drove on up the street to the southward.

"I wonder who she could be," wondered Robert

as they turned the corner and made their way toward the store where Robert traded.

They were standing at the counter waiting for a clerk to come to them, when the phaeton drove past the place again. This time Robert, without attracting any attention, started forward to see the young lady more plainly.

She drew the vehicle up almost in front of the store and stopped in front of the place next door, a candy and fruit store.

A clerk responded at once, and Robert had an excellent chance of seeing her as she smiled sweetly at the clerk and asked for a pound of candy, one of the best brands, and also for a dozen oranges.

"Why, hello, Etta!" spoke a familiar voice just beyond the phaeton, and Robert craned his neck around the iron facing of the door to see who the newcomer might be.

"Hello, Will. Won't you get in?" asked the young lady, speaking to Will Merlin, the son of the operator.

"No, I'm awfully sorry, but I've got to go over to the mine. Dad called me up a few minutes ago at home and asked me to come down because he had a sack of the payroll that he wanted counted and made out to-night, and you know that's always my end of the hard work."

She laughed merrily at the young fellow and tossed her head in one of the prettiest and most graceful gestures that Robert ever remembered of having seen.

"The idea of Will Merlin talking of hard work! Will, you're a walking personification of idleness!"

"Idleness, nothing! You don't know how much work I really do! I've got to count over that blooming money every two weeks, because the old gentleman has a bug for personally knowing what every man in the colliery gets each pay-day."

"Yes, that's dreadfully hard work! I'm so surprised that you are fat and saucy! You ought to be long and lean and hungry looking from all that hard work!" she replied, still laughing.

Just at this juncture Stanton and the two rougher friends of his came along the sidewalk and were passing the store in which Robert stood.

They slowed their pace and heard the young fellow remark:

"Well, I must be going. I guess it'll be dark before I start away from there, and I surely don't like to carry that sack of coin with me across those tracks. Gee! It's measly, ugly work!"

"Dat's de son of de old man, right now!" muttered Stanton, who showed by his language and the reeling that he had been drinking already.

"Who? De kid of old Merlin, youse say?" asked one of the ruffians.

"Say, dat's a putty gal wot's in de buggy!" said the ruffian, speaking quite a bit louder and looking straight at the young lady, whose eyes were following Will Merlin as he drew away.

(To be continued.)

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

The little lightweight Renault "tanks" established an enviable reputation as fighting machines during the last year of the war, and now, in times of peace, they promise to become equally useful. Already some of them have been converted into agricultural tractors by the removal of the guns and armor and a few slight modifications, and are said to be doing excellent service on the farms of France, where labor is painfully scarce. Another and probably temporary use that has been found for them is towing barges, taking the place of horses.

Information regarding a remarkable flight of a German Zeppelin has recently been reported by a British correspondent, who learned the facts since the coming of peace. A German airship, it is said, left Bulgaria carrying a crew of twenty-two men, tons of munitions and medical supplies, bound for German East Africa, which is approximately 3,000 miles from Bulgaria. According to the account, while the ship was flying over Khartum it received a wireless message ordering it to return, the Germans having learned that the majority of their troops in their African territory had surrendered.

Japan is a country of earthquakes, of volcanoes and of subterranean activities, and abounds in hot springs which are utilized as remedial agencies for all sorts of human ailments. The Sanitarium Nabori Betsu is located on the now wooded slopes of an extinct volcano, which, however, gives evidence of its activity by the outpouring from numerous hot springs. The baths connected with this sanitarium are of the crudest construction. The hot water is led through rude wooden gutters over a dam upon a simple platform of plank, where the patients recline in various postures, each beneath his separate spout.

Not many people know that Thomas Jefferson was a great inventor. His inventions were all of articles of every-day use. He devised a three-legged folding camp stool, which is the basis of all camp stools of that kind to-day. The stool he had made for his own use was his constant companion on occasions of outings. The revolving chair was his invention. He designed a light wagon. A copying press was devised by him and came into general use. He also invented an instrument for measuring the distance he walked. A plow and a hemp cultivator showed that his thoughts were often on agricultural matters. His plow received a gold medal in France in 1790. Jefferson never benefited financially by his inventions, but believed they should be for the use of every one without cost.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

Mother (to naughty Ethel)—Ethel, do I have to speak to you again? Ethel—No, mother, not unless you want to!

Temperance Lecturer—Friends, how can we stop the sale of liquor? Inebriate (in the rear of the hall)—Give it away.

Salesman—This vase is really worth \$30, but there being a little chip off here, I will sell it to you for \$20. Customer—Can't you break off another little chip and let me have it for \$10?

"My boy," said the patronizing member of the club, as he handed around the Flor de Toofas, "that's something like a cigar!" "Yes," responded one of the victims after he had taken a puff or two, "what is it?"

At a domestic economy lesson in Chicago a young matron was asked by the lecturer to state briefly the best way to keep milk from souring. After some reflection, the young woman replied: "Leave it to the cow."

The sick man had just come out of a long delirium. "Where am I?" he said feebly, as he felt the loving hands making him comfortable. "Where am I? In heaven?" "No, dear," cooed his devoted wife. "I am still with you."

A doctor in the country received one day a letter from an old woman asking for a bottle of cough mixture for her husband, ending with the postscript: "Please, sir, don't make it too strong, as the poor man has only got one leg."

"Goodness, little boy!" exclaimed the kindly old gentleman to the weeping youth. "What on earth is the matter?" "I had a terrible accident," bawled the boy. "Gracious! What was it?" "I met pop when I was a-playin' hookey."

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

DEVISE GUNSTOCKS OF WALNUT.

A method of making laminated gunstocks was developed at the forest products laboratory at the University of Wisconsin, which would, without reducing the strength, permit the use of the small pieces of walnut not suitable for single-piece stocks.

The application of laminated construction to many articles of trade is a development worthy of close study, according to laboratory experts. Shoe lasts, billiard balls, saddle trees, oars and paddles, tanks, barrels and kegs and various parts of vehicles and agricultural instruments may possibly be constructed with laminated wood.

FOLLOWED BY 13.

Superstitious people, believing in the unlucky number 13, will have their faith shaken by the experience of Frank Bauder of South Williamsport, Pa., who has been followed strangely by the number throughout his career as a soldier.

Private Bauder, who was stationed at Camp Meade, registered on Friday the 13th; he left Camp Meade for Baltimore, from which port he sailed for France, from track No. 13; was sent to the front line trenches on September 13.

Throughout his entire time in the army this number, commonly supposed to be extremely unlucky, has followed him, and from the fact that he took part in thirteen battles and escaped without a scratch it is apparent that at least for him the number 13 is not a hoodoo.

THE SCARLET RIDERS.

Canada's Scarlet Riders, the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, who left the dominion to distinguish themselves further on the battlefields of France, are to be reorganized on a pre-war basis, according to an announcement by government officials. Squadrons of the famous riders who for years have patrolled the prairies, mountains, forests and Arctic wastes of Canada will be returned from overseas and permitted to rejoin their old force, which will be recruited to twelve hundred men.

Regina will continue to be general headquarters and the territory policed will extend from Port Arthur to British Columbia, and far into the vast stretches of the No Man's Land of the North. As the war progressed members of the famous band, who had faced death innumerable times by daring dashes into the wilderness after criminals, one by one dropped out to join the overseas forces until the organization had all but disbanded. Official reports have shown that they continued their intrepid exploits in the war zone.

Government officials have said that the history of the Scarlet Riders is also the history of law and

order in the Canadian Northwest. The proud claim is made that the horsemen never failed to account for a criminal after once taking the trail.

WHISKEY IN RADIATORS.

"Waste is sinful," says the police department. "Particularly waste of liquor. Since we cannot drink it without breaking at least a couple of laws, we'll find another use for it."

The result of which conclusion is that 150 Detroit (Mich.) police department motor cars are now running wild on the streets, nosing into nooks and crannies everywhere looking for booze, while all the time they are in imminent danger themselves of breaking out with the "D. T.'s."

For, so it is recorded, these thrifty cops have filled each of the 150 radiators with old "red-eye" to stave off the damage of winter's cold, and it is declared that so far not a car has frozen up.

However, if you see a police car standing alone and unprotected at some lonely curb don't stick your trusty straw into the radiator and expect a free drink. You would be likely to get more than you had bargained for, as these same coppers, dog in the manger like, have poured into each car just enough kerosene to spoil the flavor of the best bourbon.

GREATEST SINGING CANARIES.

Bird dealers seldom give any information about the breeding and raising of canaries, for if there was too much competition their business, no doubt, would be affected. The bird stores buy the imported stock, commonly known as "jobbers," for \$12 a dozen and sell them at an average of \$2.50 each. The birds are of such beautiful yellow and warble so sweetly at times that the uninitiated think they are getting a bargain. To the connoisseur, however, the "chip, chip, chip," which the birds use as a finale to their warbling, would convince him in an instant of their mediocrity.

Some dealers handle many better grades of German singers, but they always are kept in a separate room from the common stock, for it is a well-known fact that birds are great imitators and a poor bird can spoil a good singer in a short time if both are kept in the same room. The high-grade birds bring as much as \$15 or \$20, but few are sold in the city, the preference of most people going to the common jobber.

The great singing canaries in the world are bred by an American of Philadelphia, who crossed an Andresburg canary with that of another breed, which breed, however, no one ever has been able to ascertain. The secret has brought hundreds of dollars into the hands of the Pennsylvania man. Some of his birds have sold for \$75.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

SHE HAD GOOD RETURNS.

Mention has been made of Miss Grace Berry of Mount Olivet, Ky., selling a small patch of tobacco at 35 cents a pound. This was a record price at the time. There was less than an acre in the patch cultivated by Miss Berry, the yield being 1,013 pounds. R. C. Bratton, the purchaser, sold the crop on the Maysville breaks at 59 cents per pound, realizing a total of \$640. Miss Berry will try another crop this year.

COMBINATION \$5 AND \$10 BILL.

A druggist in Waukegan, Ill., while counting his money recently chanced to turn over one of the \$5 bills and was astonished to find that on the other side it was a \$10 bill. Treasury Department men explain the anomaly on the theory that one side of a sheet which had been printed for \$5 notes was accidentally backed up on the press with \$10 note form.

CAUGHT A LARGE SHARK.

A grouper shark, the largest ever taken so close to shore, has been captured by Captain John Kassar while fishing from the pier at Avalon, Cal., with a hand

line. The shark, which weighed 285 pounds, almost pulled the fisherman off the pier before assistance came. Then a rope was placed around the body of the shark and block and tackle did the rest.

HARDWARE DIET FATAL TO OSTRICHES.

A hardware diet is not conducive to long life even on the part of an ostrich. As a result three out of fifty ostrich chicks at the Vilas Park Zoo at Madison, Wis., alone survive a feast which consisted of broken glass, nails, etc. Out of the stomach of one chick was removed five pieces of wood, one large pebble, a two-inch screw, two pieces of glass and several nails.

GOOD AS A FERRET.

Ferrets are banned for Ohio hunters, but Adolph Rutta, a Cleveland bank teller, has a substitute plan that places him in the ranks of the few Clevelanders who have been bringing in rabbits. When a rabbit runs into a hole Rutta pulls a long pipe of rubber hose from his hunting bag, places one end in the hole as far as he can, and yells into the other end. The frightened rabbit then bounces out in a hurry.

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